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Promoting social integration through social inclusion

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 70/126 of 17 December 2015 on promoting social integration through social inclusion. The report focuses on social integration strategies for youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples in the following areas: promotion of economic, civil and political participation; inclusive participation in planning, implementing and monitoring processes; anti-discrimination measures; and further measures to advance social integration.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, adopted the outcome document, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which it stresses the overarching aim of leaving no one behind. It includes the goal of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. To achieve that ambitious goal, additional efforts to promote social integration through social inclusion are needed.

2. Advancing social integration as part of the 2030 Agenda requires actions to advance the economic, political and social participation of disadvantaged social groups in society. Similarly, it is necessary to carry out a number of anti-discrimination measures and build a culture of inclusiveness.

3. The 2030 Agenda reflects the cross-cutting nature and importance of social inclusion, through the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets. In the resolution, Member States also acknowledged that the promotion of social inclusion was required to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

4. Member States identified several ways to promote social integration through social inclusion, in particular in the areas of economic, civil and political participation; participation of persons in vulnerable or marginalized groups or situations in planning, implementing and monitoring processes; and anti-discrimination measures, including removal of discriminatory laws, policies and practices to reduce inequalities (see resolution 70/1).

5. The present report has been issued pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/126 on promoting social integration through social inclusion. It aims to build upon the findings of five previous reports (E/CN.5/2009/2, E/CN.5/2010/2, E/CN.5/2011/2, A/68/169 and A/70/179), which provided detailed background on the concepts of social inclusion, integration and cohesion and focused on practical strategies to support them. The most recent reports focused on social protection, education institution-building and policy coherence (A/68/169) and on the promotion of active participation of people in civic, social, economic and political life, reducing inequalities and national institutions for the promotion of social inclusion and social integration (A/70/179).

6. The present report highlights recent national policies and programmes and good practices relating to social integration. In particular, it focuses on initiatives for youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples.

7. The report emphasizes efforts by Member States to promote inclusive participation, including in planning, implementing and monitoring processes. In addition, it describes recent anti-discrimination measures and other measures for advancing social integration, including United Nations system initiatives. The final part of the report contains conclusions and recommendations on advancing social integration through social inclusion in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

8. In accordance with the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 70/126 (para. 14), the Secretariat sought information from Member States and relevant actors of the United Nations system. The Secretariat received responses from the Governments of Austria, Azerbaijan, Czechia, Georgia, Hungary, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines and the Sudan. In addition, inputs were provided by the Economic Commission for Europe, the International Telecommunications Union and the World Food Programme.

II. Social integration strategies at the national and regional levels

9. Some Governments pursue specific national mechanisms for social inclusion. Such strategies often consist of an action plan at the national level and strategies promoting the inclusion of particular social groups. Under the overall national plan, action at the local level is implemented through local bodies. To illustrate, a national mechanism for the promotion of social inclusion has been active in Romania, within its national commission on social inclusion. It comprises high-level representatives from all ministries, agencies and other relevant governmental institutions. Locally, the country commissions on social inclusion are responsible for drafting local plans on social inclusion and protection and for ensuring their implementation.

10. In Mexico, the national inclusion strategy (Estrategia Nacional de Inclusión) is a coordination and cooperation mechanism between Government entities, civil society, the private sector and academia. It fosters actions guaranteeing the effective exercise of social rights of the most vulnerable groups, in line with international human rights instruments, especially in the areas of education, health, social security, nutrition and decent housing.

11. In Peru, the interventions under the policy for social development and inclusion of the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion have a life cycle perspective and cover child nutrition, early childhood development, integral child and youth development, economic inclusion and protection of older persons. In addition, the fund for the economic inclusion of rural areas (Fondo para la Inclusión Económica en Zonas Rurales) promotes the quality of life in remote areas by investments in sanitation, electrification and telecommunications.

A. Promotion of economic, civil and political participation

12. Promoting participation to ensure inclusion ranks high on Government agendas. Inclusion and participation are concepts often used in different contexts, mostly relating to groups traditionally excluded from mainstream society. Participation often implies involvement in matters affecting oneself and society. Inclusion and participation are intrinsically linked through their connections to the concepts of equality and non-discrimination. It is through active participation in economic, political, social and cultural life of a society that social inclusion can be advanced. Moreover, involving different social groups in tackling issues that affect them proves that their participation is valuable and benefits society.

13. Some Governments have established specific social inclusion strategies, with an overarching objective of ensuring participation. In Czechia, the social inclusion strategy aims to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, promoting the participation of citizens in relevant processes, involvement of civil society, social partners and people from vulnerable groups themselves. In Mexico, the social co-investment programme (Programa de Coinversión Social) strengthens cooperation between social actors, promoting the social cohesion and human development of indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities, children and youth, with a human rights perspective.

1. Civil and political participation

Youth

14. Over the past two decades, declining membership in political parties and low voter turnout in Western countries has led to concerns over the future of liberal

democracies. There is a trend away from formal participation, especially among young people. To respond to the crisis of formal political participation, Governments are eager to formulate policies promoting participation, especially of young people. Influenced by the children's rights movement, as well as development and participant-centred approaches, the youth participation agenda has emerged.[1]

15. Youth participation and representation in institutional political processes and policymaking remain comparatively low. Young people lack sufficient representation within formal political structures and consequently have low rates of parliamentary involvement, political party participation and electoral activity. What's more, countries often lack regulatory mechanisms facilitating youth participation, and only individuals aged 25 years or above are eligible to run for parliament.[2]

16. Such exclusion of youth from formal process jeopardizes the legitimacy of political systems and structures, as many remain unrepresented or underrepresented, leading young people to find other means of political engagement, with social media and information and communication technologies providing new and innovative outlets.[3]

17. The use of new forms of communications via the Internet can also contribute to better citizenship and the inclusion of youth in governance processes. For instance, online activities such as seeking candidate information have predicted high voter turnout among youth.[4]

18. Policies supporting civic participation of youth are usually embodied by programmes promoting youth development, involvement and enterprise. Youth participation is typically measured within the educational, work and political systems. In political systems, it is measured by voter turnout and political party participation. However, other approaches take into account the degree of young persons' civic-mindedness as it relates to civil society participation. In turn, civil society has advanced concepts and practices of youth participation through the role of youth in research, service delivery and advocacy.[1]

19. Member States promote different aspects of youth participation. Italy supports civic education, volunteering and youth mobility through its youth camps project and the National Civic Service. Costa Rica uses sports-based initiatives to ensure inclusion of indigenous and minority youth. In Togo, emphasis is placed on youth volunteerism in the development of experience and skills which contribute to young people's economic development (see A/70/156, para. 23). To promote political participation among young people, some countries lowered the voting age or reserved seats in parliament for youth.[5]

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[1] Philippa Collin, *Young Citizens and Political Participation in a Digital Society: Addressing the Democratic Disconnect* (United Kingdom, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[2] United Nations, "World youth report: youth civic engagement", pp. 60-62 and 95 (New York, 2016). Available from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wyr/2015/report.pdf.

[3] See United Nations, "World youth report: youth civic engagement" (New York, 2016).

[4] Jessica T. Feezel, Meredith Conroy and Mario Guerrero, "Internet use and political participation: engaging citizenship norms through online activities", *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, vol. 13, No. 2 (28 March 2016).

[5] Austria and Liberia, respectively; see E/CN.5/2017/5, para. 48. See also "Signaling a boost for gender equality, Liberia passes the 'Affirmative Action Bill'", available from http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/10/liberia-passes-the-affirmative-action-bill; and, in regard to Austria, *The Economist*, 4 February 2017, available from https://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21716030-young-voters-are-becoming-disillusioned-elections-catch-them-early-and-teach-them-value.

20. Youth participation approaches often focus on cultural and structural barriers to participation embodied in institutions that have authority over young people. There has been a significant growth in initiatives to promote youth-led social action and enterprise. Many programmes include youth-led initiatives and youth-servicing non-governmental organization programmes, as well as a number of new corporate/non-governmental organization initiatives that train, mentor and seed fund young people to develop youth agency.

21. The International Youth Foundation, the charity Nesta in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Social Ventures Australia support education, work and business skills and youth-led social ventures. In Australia, programmes such as Ausyouth, Green Corps and Work for the Dole have used participation as a strategy for youth development, especially for improving pathways to employment.[1]

22. Civil society plays an increasing role in promoting youth participation and tends to be adapting more readily than traditional institutions to the preferences of the networked young citizens. In the United Kingdom, the British Youth Council empowers young people in community decision-making. Its flagship project, Young Mayors Network, comprises directly elected young mayors to create a network of support in getting their voices heard on the national stage. Activities include group lobbying, collaborative projects and campaigns, as well as sharing ideas relating to regional and international practices.[6] The Council also coordinates campaigns and advocacy programmes, research and training to promote young people's involvement in their communities and in democratic processes at the local, national and international levels.

23. Partnerships between the Government and civil society to promote youth participation have been successfully adopted in some countries. For instance, in Scotland the Government and the non-governmental organization Children in Scotland collaborate on the project "Community hubs on self-directed support". The project aims to raise awareness among children, youth and families and enable them to make informed decisions regarding their use of the Social Care (Self-directed Support) Scotland Act 2013. The Act empowers children, youth and their families to choose how their support is provided.[7]

Older persons

24. Recent economic, social and demographic changes have contributed to some increase in civic and political involvement among older persons. Nevertheless, older persons often feel excluded from mainstream politics and societal debates and failed by representative democracy and existing development frameworks. High voter turnout among older persons has helped to ensure that their concerns are addressed in some countries. In many others, however, older persons who regularly exercise their right to vote feel that their voices have not been heard (see A/67/188, para. 21).

25. In Jamaica, economic, civil and political rights are protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. They are strengthened in the National Policy for Senior Citizens and are key principles and themes which undergird the Policy. The Vision 2030: National Development Plan aims to create an inclusive society in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play. The National Council for Senior Citizens implements programmes and activities that showcase the work and worth of older persons, advocate for their

[6] Available from www.byc.org.uk.

[7] Available from http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/project/community-hubs-on-self-directed-support.

rights and promote their full participation in all aspects of life. The Council also promotes intergenerational exchanges, income-generating projects and social activities.

26. The number of civil society organizations led by or dedicated to the development of older persons at the national and international levels is low. In the majority of cases their capacity to interact with Governments and influence policy on behalf of their constituents is low as well. Many organizations that do exist at the national level in developing countries are focused mostly on the provision of welfare-type services for older persons (see E/CN.5/2014/4, para. 53).

27. Nonetheless, a number of organizations of older persons have built strong constituencies in the past several decades. The American Association of Retired Persons, in the United States of America, and HelpAge International, based in the United Kingdom, have been influential in shaping programmes and policies benefiting older persons. They also provide their members and older persons at large with targeted information and, in some cases, services relating to all aspects of personal, social and economic life in older age (see A/67/188).

Persons with disabilities

28. Inclusion and participation are practices with a special meaning in the context of disability movements and children's rights, being essential to the education of children with disabilities and moving away from the segregation and integration that only tolerates children with special needs in the classroom.[8]

29. In Mexico, the National Council for the Development and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities is charged with mainstreaming disability issues in all aspects of life and ensuring that persons with disabilities can participate as active agents in their personal and social lives. Its national programme for development and inclusion of persons with disabilities 2017-2018 focuses on ensuring the economic, civil and political participation of persons with disabilities.

30. In some countries, civil and political participation is promoted through technological innovations. For instance, following the examples of the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries, the parliament of Canada launched a new e-petition system,[9] integrating a number of domestic and private online petitions into one governmental channel.[10] Such systems are especially useful for persons with disabilities.

Indigenous peoples

31. Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making through their traditional and national governments. Some Governments, like Denmark, recognize indigenous peoples' traditional government institutions with which they have established formal relationships. The nature of those relationships varies from country to country. There are (or have been) indigenous members of parliament in some countries, including Bangladesh, Burundi, Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal and the Philippines. Indigenous parliaments have been established in Finland, Norway and Sweden for the Sami peoples.

[8] Tali Gal and Benedetta Faedi Duramy, eds., *International Perspectives and Empirical Findings on Child Participation. From Social Exclusion to Child-Inclusive Policies* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2015).

[9] Kennedy Stewart, "E-petitions put Canadians in control of the political agenda", *The Huffington Post*, updated 23 March 2016, accessed 10 April 2017. Available from http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/kennedy-stewart/electronic-petitioning-canada_b_9521506.html.

[10] Available from http://petitions.parl.gc.ca.

32. Indigenous peoples have primarily been active, however, at the local, municipal and rural levels. Legal reforms aimed at the recognition of the intercultural character of States, the promotion of women's leadership and the establishment of mechanisms for binding political dialogue between indigenous peoples, private initiatives, parliaments and Governments are necessary steps towards the full civil and political participation of indigenous peoples (see E/C.19/2014/6).

2. Economic participation of social groups

33. Access to jobs represents the most effective tool for social inclusion, as decent jobs empower citizens and enable them to lead a productive life. Hence, in some countries, measures to boost education, vocational training and apprenticeships have been implemented. Fiscal and legal frameworks aimed at supporting the business environment have also been introduced.

34. Economic participation is often promoted through employment support services. The Twinning programme in Georgia (see http://eu-nato.gov.ge/en/page/twinning) aims to strengthen the institutional and human resource capacities of the employment support services to deliver well-targeted, high-quality, gender-sensitive and cost-effective services to job seekers. Employment centres provide job seekers with information, counselling, registration and employment promotion and training programmes. Participation of the less competitive workforce is the priority during the implementation of vocational training programmes for the unemployed.

35. In Azerbaijan, the introduction of an electronic system for registration of employment contracts has significantly contributed to building a complete database on the labour market and labour relations, legalization of illegal employment and protection of employee rights. It has also increased revenues for the State budget and fees for mandatory social insurance and has enabled better protection of workers' rights.

36. In Hungary, the job protection action plan regulates various options for the employment of disadvantaged groups, such as employees under the age of 25 and above the age of 55, long-term job seekers, those returning from maternity leave and people of Roma origin.

37. As young people typically experience the greatest difficulty finding employment and are three times more likely than older adults to be unemployed, their economic participation is a challenge in many countries. Governments have made tackling youth unemployment and underemployment a priority and have made efforts to promote youth entrepreneurship and create internship programmes for young people to acquire marketable skills.

38. According to the International Labour Organization, entrepreneurship programmes tend to help disadvantaged youth to work their way out of poverty, while public works schemes provide short-term opportunities for young people.[11] Access to credit, microfinance and capital remains crucial to improving the economic participation of youth and can serve to encourage youth entrepreneurship, given that young people are frequently considered as high risk by lenders in the light of their lack of business experience and financial collateral.

39. At the national level, countries support youth economic participation by encouraging employment initiatives, entrepreneurship and youth skill training. Such

[11] See statement by the ILO at the 55th session of the Commission for Social Development. Available from http://papersmart.unmeetings.org/ecosoc/csocd/fifty-fifth-session/statements/.

initiatives can be effective for combating youth unemployment and underemployment and poverty and for meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

40. Economic inclusion efforts in Peru focus, inter alia, on improving access to the labour market, through capacity-building for young people, investment in information and communications technology, support for small businesses in vulnerable areas and technical assistance.

41. At the regional level, the European Union launched a new youth initiative, "Investing in Europe's Youth", focused on employment, education, learning mobility and solidarity. To increase the economic participation of young persons, the initiative proposed action regarding: the creation of the European Solidarity Corps; the full and sustainable implementation of the Youth Guarantee scheme, particularly for low-qualified and vulnerable youth with complex needs, including those with disabilities; and the creation of the programme, Erasmus Pro, to support long-term mobility of youth apprentices.

42. The African Union Summit, "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in youth", held in July 2017, endorsed the establishment of the African Union youth fund for projects harnessing the demographic dividend, particularly of girls and young women, and authorized allocation to the fund of at least 1 per cent of the programme budget of the African Union.

43. States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted a five-year workplan on youth 2016-2020, focusing mainly on youth entrepreneurship and employability. Governments in the region are working on the development of an ASEAN youth development index, which will help to enhance the conceptualization and evaluation of the outcomes and effectiveness of youth initiatives.

44. Economic participation through employment is as important to the social integration of older persons as it is for other social groups. In developed countries, older persons close to retirement may wish to remain economically active even if they have sufficient resources to retire on. In developing countries, older persons often want to remain employed out of necessity, to secure their livelihoods. Whatever the case may be, the right of right older persons to remain in employment should be upheld (see A/68/167). It is estimated that by 2030, the number of older workers in the labour force will increase by a further 270 million to almost 750 million workers, or to over 18 per cent of the total labour force.[12]

45. Member States have recognized the economic benefits of longer employment of older persons and have adopted measures to support their economic participation. National employment and retirement provisions to extend working life have been enacted in some countries, with several adopting legislation that increases the retirement age progressively.

46. In Australia, France, Greece, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and the United Kingdom legislation has been passed to increase the pensionable age progressively for both men and women. Denmark introduced a law that raises the official retirement age from 65 to 67 in the period 2019-2022. Furthermore, several countries have removed or are planning to remove restrictions on the concurrent receipt of a pension and income from work (see A/68/167).

47. Moreover, increasingly, financial incentives, in the form of tax breaks or credit, are being offered to employers who recruit, retrain or re-employ older

[12] International Labour Office, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2015* (Geneva, 2015). Available from http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2015/WCMS_337069/lang--en/index.htm.

workers. Japan has increased employment opportunities for older persons through an amendment to its law regarding the stabilization of employment of older persons, which entered into force in 2013, requiring companies to secure employment for those wishing to work until age 65.

48. In Mexico, the national institute of older persons (Instituto Nacional de las Personas Adultas Mayores), promotes human development of older persons. It offers programmes benefiting older persons economically, for example, through discount and nutrition cards, medical assistance and access to credit. The institute also supports active ageing centres and promotes participation in the labour market.

49. In Jamaica, the National Policy for Senior Citizens is currently under revision, in keeping with the Government's commitment to establish a comprehensive social protection strategy, including adequate safety nets, mitigating risks to economic and social development. The objective is to integrate older persons into development across all sectors and to align policy with Vision 2030 (see para. 25) and with emerging priorities at the local, regional and global levels. At its core lies a life-course intergenerational approach to policy that stresses equity, reciprocity and inclusiveness of all age groups in all policy areas.

50. In Mexico, the National System for Development and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, established in 2016, fosters policies, programmes and actions for persons with disabilities.

51. In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 10754 — An Act Expanding the Benefits and Privileges of Persons with Disability of 27 July 2015 entitles persons with disabilities to exemptions from value-added tax on the sale of selected goods and services; educational assistance; special discounts on commodities; and tax incentives for those caring for and living with persons with disabilities.

52. In some countries, new legislation enlarging the autonomy of persons with disabilities has been enacted. In 2016, Germany adopted the German Federal Participation Act (Bundesteilhabegesetz), which broadens the autonomy of persons with disabilities from the community to personal levels and supports employers hiring persons with disabilities.[13]

53. In Stockholm, Sweden, the participation programme for people with disabilities 2011-2016 is a directive for city committees and company boards to increase the accessibility of persons with disabilities to the city's indoor and outdoor environments and e-services. It also aims to increase the proportion of students with disabilities in school and their participation in leisure and other activities.[14]

54. Recent legislative initiatives in Japan, including the Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities of 2013 and an act on employment promotion, etc. of persons with disabilities (2014) established quotas for persons with disabilities. The law also requires employers to provide accommodation and facilities appropriate for employees with disabilities.[15]

55. In Azerbaijan, the introduction of the electronic system for registering people with disabilities and assigning disability status (Subsystem for Medical and Social Expertise and Rehabilitation) fosters a transparent environment for medical and

[13] See Ben Knight, "Activists angry as Germany passes contentious disability law", *Deutsche Welle*, 1 December 2016. Available from http://www.dw.com/en/activists-angry-as-germany-passes-contentious-disability-law/a-36606791.

[14] Stockholms Stad, "Stockholm — a city for everyone: participation programme for people with disabilities 2011-2016" (2011). Available from www.stockholm.se.

[15] Mutsuko Asakura, "Prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment", *Waseda Bulletin of Comparative Law*, vol. 34, chap. 2 (2014). Available from http://www.waseda.jp/folaw/icl/assets/uploads/2016/02/d08da3c0259ba3ee3cefdf2d7cbb76e5.pdf.

social expertise. The assessment of disability is conducted by means of a notice issued by a public health institution that reflects all functional diagnostics, laboratory results, history of therapy, clinical prognosis, and the like. To ensure fairness of decisions, the system forwards an anonymous notice to several randomly chosen medical and social expert commissions for assessment of the disability. The system also automatically tracks the duration of different degrees of disability.

56. Indigenous peoples across the world work to improve the conditions in their communities, lands and territories. Many indigenous peoples are involved in civic and economic activities to protect and revitalize their cultures, languages and traditions. Increasingly, indigenous peoples mobilize to protect the environment and their communities from dispossession of land, extraction of natural resources, megaprojects and deforestation of their lands and territories. Many indigenous environmental activists promote alternative visions of development that place a primacy on sustainability, human rights and the rights of Mother Earth, such as the concept of "vivir bien" (living well).[16]

57. In Peru, the strategy for social action with sustainability (Estrategia de Acción Social con Sostenibilidad) focuses on improving the living conditions of indigenous populations of the Amazon. In particular, it promotes economic inclusion of households and facilitates access to health and education services.

B. Inclusive participation in planning, implementing and monitoring processes

58. In terms of inclusive participatory and representative decision-making processes, some countries have a long tradition of tripartite consultations between the Government and the most representative organizations of employers and workers. In Czechia, such negotiations are conducted within the advisory body of the Government, the Council of Economic and Social Agreement.

Youth

59. Many Governments recognize that young people should be actively involved in the design, development and implementation of youth policies and programmes. Governments ensure youth involvement by fostering information-sharing and including young people in decision-making at all stages of the policymaking process, making sure that youth participation is substantive and consistent (see E/CN.5/2017/5).

60. Moreover, the active participation of young people in the consultative processes for the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and plans affecting their lives makes those policies and processes more transparent and legitimate. It also helps to accurately reflect youth's current needs and challenges. What's more, it is increasingly being recognized that the involvement of young people should not be confined to youth-related policies but could be expanded to all policies that have implications for them (ibid.).

61. Several Member States, such as Austria, Azerbaijan and Canada, recognize the importance of ensuring the active involvement of young people in decision-making and policy development. In some countries, including Libya, the Republic of Korea

[16] United Nations, background note on indigenous human rights defenders for the sixteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, held in New York from 24 April to 5 May 2017. Available from https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2016/08/Indigenous-Human-Rights-Defenders.pdf.

and Sri Lanka, mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making have been developed (ibid.).

62. To foster the participation of young people in institutional structures, several countries have also initiated municipal, regional or national participation mechanisms to engage with issues affecting their communities. They include youth parliaments or advisory bodies that contribute to the work of national assemblies or parliaments. Large-scale consultations, surveys and forums carried out with young people and youth-led organizations are used by Member States to inform their work, policies and decision-making processes.[17]

Older persons

63. National strategies, action plans or specific legislation concerning older persons geared towards particular areas such as non-discrimination or the right to health have been enacted in some countries. To target the strategy, policy or law to the needs and concerns of older persons, the involvement of older persons in the formulation of such strategies is essential.

64. Older persons can be included in decision-making processes either through consultative bodies, which may consist of members of civil society representing the interests of older persons, or through comprehensive consultative processes between the Government and older persons, such as public consultations, working groups or more targeted focus groups (see A/HRC/33/44, para. 29).

65. Older persons monitoring at the grass-roots level enables them to monitor and implement policies and services affecting their lives and use the evidence to advocate for change. It supports older persons in taking the lead in documenting the challenges they encounter, so that they can hold their Governments accountable for the fulfilment of their human rights.

66. In several countries, older citizens monitoring groups play an important role in grievance redress mechanisms of the Governments. Such a citizen-led accountability approach is supported by a variety of donor countries and the World Bank through its Global Partnership for Social Accountability. Civil society organizations support associations of older persons by raising awareness about the human rights of older persons, as well as the laws and policies that affect them.

67. Several good practices deserve particular mention. For instance, improved transparency in the allocation of social allowances at the community level led to an increase in the old age allowance in Bangladesh. In Bolivia, older persons register for health insurance schemes thanks to public awareness campaigns by older citizens monitoring groups. In Kyrgyzstan the groups provided evidence for consultations on the Government's new poverty reduction and social protection strategies. Local advocacy in the United Republic of Tanzania led to increased funding for non-communicable diseases and geriatric health units. In Pakistan, data on older citizens monitoring groups was used to lobby humanitarian organizations to respond to the needs of older persons in their emergency responses.[18]

Persons with disabilities

68. Participation in political and public life by persons with disabilities was on the agenda of the nineteenth session of the Human Rights Council, held in Geneva from 27 February-23 March 2012, with a view to establishing the normative content of

[17] Examples of such mechanisms are provided in E/CN.5/2017/5, sect. IV.

[18] HelpAge International, "Older citizen monitoring". Available from http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/older-citizen-monitoring/.

political rights of persons with disabilities, including the right to vote and to be elected, the right to participate in the conduct of public affairs and the right to have access to public service (see A/HRC/19/36, paras. 3-12). Accordingly, the Government of Australia developed monitoring indicators for its National Disability Strategy 2010-2020. The policy aims to ensure that persons with disability have every opportunity to be active participants in the civic life of the community as jurors, board members and elected representatives.[19]

69. Persons with an intellectual or physical disability struggle to exercise their rights to vote in many countries. In the United States, approximately 30 million persons with disabilities are eligible to vote, but they are 20 per cent less likely to vote. The American Association of People with Disabilities' campaign raises public awareness of the issue.[20]

Indigenous peoples

70. Indigenous communities have played a crucial role in preserving their local environment and heritage, but top-down national heritage preservation frameworks often limit their participation in decision-making processes. Nevertheless, efforts are under way to empower indigenous people to participate in a number of decision-making processes affecting their lives.

71. Member States, in the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/2 of 22 September 2014, committed themselves to the empowerment of indigenous women and to formulating and implementing, in collaboration with indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women and their organizations, policies and programmes designed to promote capacity-building and strengthen their leadership. They expressed their support for measures that would ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous women in decision-making processes and eliminate barriers to their participation in political, economic, social and cultural life (para. 17).

72. In Nepal, the traditional *guthi* system features an inclusive decision-making process reflecting indigenous people's knowledge and sense of autonomy and promoting the preservation of indigenous cultural heritage.[21] In Peru, the Law on the Right of Consultation of Indigenous Peoples enables indigenous people to open a consultation process between the community and the Government in regard to any activity, plan, administrative or legal measures, or development project affecting their ancestral indigenous territories.[22]

C. Anti-discrimination measures

73. The principle of non-discrimination applied in international human rights law obligates Governments to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. Overtly discriminatory laws are rapidly becoming a thing of the past, and Governments are working to implement anti-discriminatory laws and policies promoting the well-

[19] Commonwealth of Australia, *2010-2020 National Disability Strategy* (2011).

[20] Available from http://www.aapd.com/press-releases/aapd-announces-rev-campaign-making-disability-vote-count/.

[21] Krishna K. Shrestha and others, eds., *Inclusive Urbanization: Rethinking Policy, Practice and Research in the Age of Climate Change* (New York, Routledge, 2015).

[22] Graciela Rodriguez-Ferrand, "Peru: new law granting right of consultation to indigenous peoples, *Global Legal Monitor*, 27 September 2011. Available from http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/peru-new-law-granting-right-of-consultation-to-indigenous-peoples/.

being of and giving voice to disadvantaged groups.[25] In some countries new institutions to implement anti-discriminatory measures have been created.

74. In Czechia, the Government has established several specialized advisory councils, such as the Inter-ministerial Commission for Roma Community Affairs, the Government Council for Human Rights and the Government Council for National Minorities, focused on inclusion and equal opportunities of people from vulnerable groups. Czechia has also established the institution of Public Defender of Rights (the ombudsperson).

75. In Mexico, the national programme for equality and non-discrimination, 2014-2018, established guidelines for all public administration at the federal level to eliminate all forms of discrimination arising from social exclusion, historical discrimination and poverty.

76. The Government of Georgia has committed to strengthening social dialogue and amending the labour code so that labour standards in Georgia are in compliance with international standards. Amendments are also being made to other laws dealing with the elimination of all forms of discrimination and social protection of people with disabilities.

77. Indigenous youth, youth in rural areas, youth with disabilities and young migrants are potentially at greater risk of marginalization and social exclusion (see E/CN.5/2017/5, para. 55). To promote social inclusion of youth, policymakers can factor the concerns and needs of young people from marginalized groups into participatory processes as essential stakeholders.

78. The distinct concerns of marginalized groups are sometimes reflected in national youth policy and youth-related legislation (for example, in Austria, Azerbaijan and Swaziland). In Austria, legislation and corresponding policy frameworks ensure that minority groups are represented in participatory mechanisms, and in Lithuania and Switzerland frameworks to combat poverty and discrimination have been created (ibid., para. 60).

79. Member States continue to focus on disadvantages faced by marginalized groups in their programming, particularly regarding youth with disabilities, indigenous youth and young migrants. In Mexico the No Hate/Sin Odio campaign has targeted young people and aims to counteract expressions of hate affecting various populations, including migrants and groups affected by discrimination owing to their sexual orientation, both in physical spaces and in digital media.

80. Some countries have adopted laws banning discrimination against older persons in employment practices and the workplace. Comprehensive laws prohibiting age discrimination in various areas of public life, including housing, education and employment, and even the provision of goods, services and facilities, such as loans, mortgages and insurance, have also been enacted. Enforcing the right to non-discrimination requires complaint mechanisms, and in some cases that competence is conferred on equality bodies. It is important that equality bodies, such as commissioners or ombudspersons, be established by law to monitor age discrimination and advocate for its elimination across all areas of public life (see A/HRC/33/44, para. 63).

81. In some countries measures have been taken to protect older persons against discrimination in employment. For example, in the Philippines, the 2016 Act Prohibiting Discrimination against Any Individual in Employment on Account of

[25] See United Nations, *Leaving No One Behind: the Imperative of Inclusive Development: Report on the World Social Situation 2016*, chap. IV. Available from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/full-report.pdf.

Age and Providing Penalties Therefor, prohibits arbitrary discrimination in employment on account of age. The legislation also mandates studies and programmes by the Department of Labour and Employment to minimize impediments to the employment of older persons and enhance the knowledge and skills of every individual regardless of age.

82. In Jamaica, the national policy adopts a productive ageing model congruent with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, and highlights the value of older persons to the family and society. Public education is promoted to reduce ageism and other forms of discrimination through seminars, workshops and the media.

83. Civil society plays an important role in fighting ageism and discrimination against older persons though public information campaigns. HelpAge International has been actively campaigning to stop age discrimination through its Age Demands Action campaign.

84. Governments continue to take action in respect of discrimination persons with disabilities. In Jamaica, the Disabilities Act, 2014, provides for freedom, equality, tolerance and respect for persons with disabilities. Universal access to basic education, public infrastructure and facilities and information are ensured under the Act.

85. In Brazil, Costa Rica, Ghana, South Africa and Uganda various legal frameworks ranging from anti-discrimination in employment legislation to ensuring equal opportunities for persons with disabilities are being implemented. Legal frameworks for equal pay for equal work have been adopted in Brazil, Cuba and Mongolia, while training of trade union leaders on disability rights promotion has been undertaken in Ethiopia and Zambia.[24]

86. The General Assembly, by its resolution 61/295 of 13 September 2007, adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Since then, some countries have developed constitutional and legislative measures recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples. However, progress on the ground has been slow, and in many countries, indigenous peoples are still not recognized. The first step to overcome exclusion is to address the lack of recognition and the remaining discriminatory laws and practices.

87. With the promulgation of the 2011 Law on the Promotion and Protection of the Right of the Indigenous Populations, the Congo became the first country in Africa to promote a law on protection of indigenous peoples. It prohibits enslavement of and all forms of discrimination against indigenous peoples, and all forms of education, information and manifestations which have adverse effects on the cultural identity, history and aspirations of the populations.[25]

88. Despite legal and institutional actions to end discriminatory laws and practices, discrimination often has deep cultural roots. Even in countries with non-discriminatory and protective laws, prejudice, stereotypes and discriminatory practices are common, with some individuals and groups still subject to bias, negative attitudes and stereotyping. Measuring prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviours is then necessary to realize the scope of the problem and find solutions in addition to legal measures.[26]

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[24] United Nations, "Global status report on disability and development", 2015.

[25] International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, "Indigenous peoples in the Republic of the Congo". Available from www.iwgia.org/regions/africa/republic-of-congo.

[26] See *Report on the World Social Situation 2016*, p. 109. Available from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/full-report.pdf.

III. Further measures to advance social integration, including United Nations system initiatives

Integration of vulnerable groups

89. Socially excluded people are often denied the opportunities available to others to improve their livelihood and escape from poverty on their own. Under the right circumstances, however, they can become key drivers in the sustainable development of societies and in poverty eradication. For example, numerous studies have shown that in the long run, migrants help to expand the tax base, energize labour markets and generate new demand for goods and services. It is therefore imperative for States to adopt policies to avoid the social exclusion of marginalized groups, such as migrants.

90. In Austria the integration of migrants has grown in importance in recent years. The National Action Plan for Integration, adopted in 2010, focuses on integration based on participation in economic, social, political and cultural processes, as well as compliance with relevant obligations. The plan consists of several fields of action, including language and education, work and employment, and rule of law, as well as values, health and social issues, intercultural dialogue, sports and leisure, housing and the regional dimension of integration. Each dimension has clearly defined challenges, principles and goals. The Action Plan targets society at large as well as persons with a migrant background.

91. In addition, the "integration through performance" approach of Austria means that people should not be judged on the basis of their background, but on their contribution to the host country. The general emphasis is on creating appropriate conditions for integration and dismantling prejudices and stereotypes, while motivating immigrants and inspiring them to have confidence in their prospects of achievement in Austria.

92. In Germany, the Government funded a pilot project called "jmd2start — advice for young refugees", providing 7.1 million Euros for the period 2015-2017.[27] The project helps young refugees to be better integrated in society, providing advice relating to asylum application, education, work training, health service and sport projects. It includes an online system comprising an information portal for young refugees, an arrival app, online self-study courses in the German language and video training in Arabic.[28]

93. Social integration of the Roma people in Europe poses many challenges. The Government of Hungary established a reconciliation council for Roma affairs, a forum for direct dialogue given the task of reviewing the implementation of past measures through feedback from stakeholders and determination of further actions necessary for the inclusion of Roma.

Gender equality

94. A gender perspective is essential to address social integration and inclusion, especially through women's economic empowerment. There is a need to improve awareness of the situation of women and women entrepreneurs and of the importance of a gender-sensitive policy environment in the workplace.

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[27] See Germany, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, "2016 strategic social reporting — Germany".

[28] Germany, Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth, *Information Online*. Available from http://www.jmd2start.de/modellprojekt/information-online.

95. In Mexico, the National Institute for Women works to guarantee gender equality. Through its programme — Women PYME — it offers preferential credits to women entrepreneurs to contribute to their economic autonomy. The observatory of political participation of women in Mexico (Observatorio de Participación Política de las Mujeres en México) disseminates information on political and electoral rights of women at the federal, state and municipal levels and on removing the obstacles to women's political participation. The national programme for equality of opportunities and non-discrimination against women, 2013-2018 aims to achieve gender equality through participatory democracy, planning and budgeting.

Inclusive education

96. The value of an inclusive approach to the education of children with disabilities is increasingly recognized. The United Kingdom has adopted an inclusive approach through the co-location of special and mainstream schools to strengthen the interaction among students with mixed abilities and non-disabled students, as well as with teachers. In addition, curriculums have been adapted to teaching methods and forms of assessment that cover a wide range of learning needs.[29]

97. In the United States a twin-track approach exists, aimed at placing children in the most integrated setting possible, while providing for more specialized placement where this is considered necessary.[30] In Bulgaria, it was found that the budget per child educated in a special school can be up to three times higher than for a similar child in a regular school.[31] This shows that segregating is not necessarily cost-effective compared with inclusive education.

Human rights education

98. Many Member States have elaborated national action plans and strategies for human rights education. To support those efforts, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has developed specific tools, including guidelines for national plans of action for human rights education and a handbook on national human rights plans of action. Some plans or strategies focus on specific sectors, such as the school system, or target specific audiences, such as professionals, vulnerable groups or the general public.[32] For instance, the National Action Plan for the Protection of Human Rights in the Sudan 2013-2023 focuses, inter alia, on educational policies, development of the syllabus and special training for teachers.[33]

99. In addition, a national dialogue programme has been launched in the Sudan with the theme "Sudan, a nation for all". Some of the issues covered include peace and unity, economy, freedom and political rights, and governance. Respect for diversity is stressed as discrimination against minorities and their marginalization are considered crimes against human rights and a threat to peace.

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[29] See Hazel Bines and Philippa Lei, "Disability and education: the longest road to inclusio ", *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 31, No. 5 (September 2011).

[30] See World Health Organization, *World Report on Disability*, p. 210 (Geneva, 2011). Available from http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/.

[31] United Nations Children's Fund, *The State of the World's Children 2013: Children with Disabilities* (New York, 2013). Available from https://www.unicef.org/sowc2013/files/SWCR2013_ENG_Lo_res_24_Apr_2013.pdf.

[32] See OHCHR, "National action plans for human rights education". Available from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/NationalActionPlansHumanRightsEducation.aspx.

[33] Advisory Council on Human Rights. Available from http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Education/Training/actions-plans/Excerpts/Sudan2013-2023.pdf.

Digital inclusion

100. Digital inclusion refers to ensuring access to information and communications technology (ICT), and to its use for the social and economic development of persons with specific needs. Despite the expanding deployment of telecommunications networks, many women and girls, persons with disabilities, youth, children and indigenous peoples remain excluded from full participation in the information society.

101. People with specific needs often face barriers to using information and communications technology. Persons with specific disabilities may not be able to see screens, hear sound on a phone or input commands to a mouse, computer or touch screen phone. These barriers can be overcome when the technology is accessible and affordable. Women, youth and indigenous peoples who are not currently online often require basic and advanced digital literacy training along with an understanding of how to use information and communications technology for their social and economic empowerment.

102. Barriers faced by people with specific needs can be removed through effective laws, policies, national broadband plans, regulations and business practices, as well as through information and communications technology training and development strategies that take into account the specific needs of women, girls, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities to ensure an inclusive information society.

103. A number of measures have strengthened the capacity of Member States to develop and implement digital inclusion policies, strategies and guidelines to ensure access to information and communications technology for persons with disabilities. For instance, the *Model ICT Accessibility Policy Report*[34] is now available in all 6 official International Telecommunication Union (ITU) languages to facilitate its use by countries around the globe and dissemination among members and organizations of persons with disabilities, such as the World Federation of the Deaf and the Pacific Disability Forum. The *Report* is used both to raise awareness of the types of information and communications technology accessibility policies that ITU members can adopt and to build their capacity to implement such policies.

Public-private partnerships

104. The private sector needs to be engaged in the creation of appropriate infrastructure and the provision of social services to advance social integration and inclusion. Collaboration between the private and public sectors, such as well-structured public-private partnerships can make an important contribution to overcoming resource constraints and mobilizing necessary expertise in multiple areas, including health, education or infrastructure. However, it is essential that the arrangements reflect the needs of the populations they aim to serve.

105. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) promotes "people-first" public-private partnerships, developing standard approaches and best practice models. The standards are being developed with the collaboration of experts from national Governments, academia, the private sector, civil society and other international organizations. "Promoting people first: public-private partnerships for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals"[35] refers to projects that support the 2030 Agenda. One of the criteria used is the degree to which projects engage with all

[34] ITU (Geneva, 2014). Available from https://www.itu.int/pub/D-PHCB-SIS_A.01-2014.

[35] ECE (July 2016). Available from http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Promoting-People-first-Public-Private-Partnerships-PPPs-for-the-UN-SDGs_UNECE_IATF-Issue-Brief.pdf.

stakeholders, including the citizens who are the main beneficiaries of infrastructure and public services.

106. Frameworks that facilitate access to information and promote inclusive governance and participatory decision-making are critical to advancing social inclusion. The Economic Commission for Europe hosts the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. This legal instrument provides a solid framework for Governments to ensure transparency, effective public engagement and the required remedies in relation to both the protection of the environment and human rights. The Convention empowers the public, including individuals, non-governmental organizations, local communities and other stakeholders, to access environmental information, participate in decision-making and have access to justice. It also places great emphasis on the protection of the rights of whistle-blowers and environmental activists.

107. Owing to the cross-cutting nature of the instrument, it is applicable throughout the 2030 Agenda, including in regard to goals related to environmental matters, good governance, health, well-being and the reduction of inequalities.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

108. With the overarching commitment to leave no one behind, the historic and ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that development will be sustainable only if it is inclusive. Member States, civil society and other stakeholders have acknowledged that promoting social inclusion with a central goal of attaining social integration is fundamental to achieving a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable future. Consequently, targeted measures to address the distinct obstacles faced by disadvantaged, marginalized or otherwise excluded social groups have been enacted. In particular, special efforts have been undertaken to overcome the barriers to participation in civil, political, social and cultural life that some groups face.

109. Moreover, several Member States have introduced policies aimed at tackling discrimination, as well as providing preferential access to some services and enabling the participation of excluded persons and communities in decision-making processes.

110. In addition, efforts to promote new forms of inclusion, such as digital inclusion, have recently emerged as a growing priority in national contexts. Digital inclusion and e-government initiatives have been found to further contribute to better public participation in the civil, political and economic life of every society.

111. Nevertheless, to ensure full inclusion of vulnerable groups in societies, it is vital to continue aiming at building a culture of inclusiveness, by changing the norms underpinning or perpetuating unequal power relations and disadvantage experienced by some social groups, including migrants and refugees in host countries. As noted in the present report, human rights education initiatives have an often untapped potential to contribute to this goal. It is also essential to maintain a gender perspective in all social integration efforts.

B. Recommendations

112. To contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Governments are strongly encouraged:

(a) To promote the civil, political and economic participation of youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups, through, inter alia, promoting their involvement in political processes; access to credit; and vocational training and employment support services for all groups;

(b) To ensure inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making processes in the design and implementation of social policies and programmes, through, inter alia, investments in digital inclusion and e-government initiatives increasing public participation in civil, political and economic life;

(c) To pursue anti-discrimination measures through appropriate legislation, educational curriculums, media campaigns and other measures;

(d) To ensure inclusion of a gender perspective in all social inclusion strategies and initiatives, especially in terms of the economic empowerment of women and a gender-sensitive policy environment in the workplace;

(e) To continue sharing good practices, including through relevant United Nations forums, to increase civil, political and economic participation; and to ensure inclusive decision-making processes and anti-discriminatory measures and other measures to promote social integration through social inclusion to ensure that no one is left behind.

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Youth development links to sustainable development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/127. It provides an analysis of the linkages and complementarities on youth issues between the World Programme of Action for Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also describes recent initiatives in the area of youth policies and programmes based on inputs received from Member States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations. The report concludes with key recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 70/127, on policies and programmes involving youth, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the resolution, including on the linkages and complementarities on youth issues between the World Programme of Action for Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to be prepared in consultation with Member States as well as the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes and regional commissions, taking into account the work done by the United Nations system, and also encouraged the Secretariat to consult, as appropriate, with youth-led and youth-focused organizations. Further to that request, the Secretariat consulted with relevant entities and received responses from 37 Member States,[1] 12 United Nations entities that are members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development[2] and two youth-led organizations.[3]

2. Section II of the present report analyses the youth dimensions of sustainable development. It presents an overview of the interlinkages between the two frameworks, in particular in relation to monitoring youth development (see annex).[4] Sections III and IV highlight activities and initiatives undertaken by Member States, United Nations entities and youth-led organizations to implement the World Programme of Action.

3. Section V sets out recommendations on how to generate synergies between youth development and sustainable development.

II. The youth dimensions of sustainable development

4. From its inception, young people were actively involved in the development of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through: (a) the formal inclusion of young people in United Nations negotiations related to sustainable development through the major group system, in particular the children and youth major group; (b) consultations with young people held at the national level by Member States to inform their national positions; and (c) the My World global survey.[5]

5. Echoing this participation, as well as the growing interest in and increased policy focus on youth issues as they relate to sustainable development, youth are

[1] Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lebanon, Mexico, Montenegro, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Serbia, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey and Uruguay.

[2] The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office.

[3] The children and youth major group and the European Youth Forum.

[4] A more detailed comparison between the indicators of the World Programme of Action for Youth and those of the Sustainable Development Goals is available from www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay/2017/comparison-education-indicators.pdf.

[5] As of June 2017, the answers from young respondents to the My World global survey totalled more than 5 million, making youth the first cohort of respondents.

given specific recognition in the preamble of the 2030 Agenda, and both explicit and implicit references to youth are found throughout its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

6. The pledges made in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first, as well as its affirmation to be people-centred, ensure that youth are included in all aspects of the Agenda. At the same time, youth are given specific mention in four areas: youth employment, adolescent girls, education, and sports for peace. Finally, young people are recognized as agents of change, entrusted with fulfilling their own potential and ensuring a world fit for future generations.

A. Interlinkages between the World Programme of Action for Youth and the Sustainable Development Goals

7. Youth development is not only critical to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, but is also recognized in other development frameworks, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

8. The Sustainable Development Goals are integrated, indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable, and therefore all of them apply to youth. Although there is no stand-alone Goal on youth, the language used in a majority of the Goals encompasses all social groups, including youth (Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 16), while Goal 3, "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", is the only one that specifically addresses age.

9. Many of the priority areas listed in the World Programme of Action[6] are addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals, with the exception of intergenerational issues. Some of the priorities are clearly identifiable within the Goals, such as education, in Goal 4; employment, in Goal 8; and girls and young women, in Goal 5, while other areas are dealt with less explicitly, such as juvenile justice, in Goal 16. In addition, some Goals address several priorities, such as Goal 3, which deals with health care, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.

10. A mapping exercise and analysis[7] of the overlaps between the indicators relating for the World Programme of Action[8] and those for the Sustainable Development Goals suggests that enhancing the implementation and monitoring of the World Programme of Action will accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

11. Of the 232 indicators listed in the revised list of global Sustainable Development Goal indicators,[9] 68 provide information relevant to youth development, while an additional 18 are deemed highly relevant to youth in that

[6] The World Programme of Action addresses 15 priority areas: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, the environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making, globalization, information and communications technology, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and intergenerational issues.

[7] The analysis is based on a global indicator framework developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, which was adopted by the Statistical Commission at its forty-eighth session, held in March 2017 (see E/2017/24-E/CN.3/2017/35, chap. I, sect. A). The analysis is also based on the complete set of metadata for currently available indicators as of May 2017 (available from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/).

[8] See E/CN.5/2013/8.

[9] E/CN.3/2017/2, annex III.

they measure one of the priority areas of the World Programme of Action. However, those 18 indicators are not disaggregated by age at the global level and do not reflect a clear definition of or methodology for data collection. If they were disaggregated by age, the total number of youth-relevant Sustainable Development Goal indicators would increase to 85.

12. Of the 68 indicators mentioned above, 53 directly contribute information about the sociodemographic situation of young people, while 15 provide information about the enabling environment that is conducive to youth development.

13. The youth sociodemographic indicators can be divided into two categories. On the one hand, nine indicators measure youth-specific issues, such as adolescent births; youth not in employment, education or training; child marriage; and youth having experienced sexual violence during childhood. On the other hand, 44 indicators are disaggregated by age or by group, for example, the proportion of individuals using the Internet or the number of victims of human trafficking. It is worth noting that, while the language used in some sociodemographic indicators does not refer to age disaggregation, metadata indicates that possibility for 21 indicators.

14. Fifteen indicators provide information about the enabling environment that is conducive to youth development. These can measure specific youth enablers, such as trained teachers in lower and upper secondary education, or effective climate-change-related planning and management focusing on youth. They can also measure enabling factors conducive to social development in general, such as social protection coverage or public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment.

15. A set of 49 indicators has been proposed[10] for selection and adaptation by Member States in monitoring and assessing the implementation of the World Programme of Action. A comparison of the 68 Sustainable Development Goal indicators with the 49 World Programme of Action indicators reveals that 20 are identical or similar in wording, meaning or objective. This represents nearly half of the World Programme of Action indicators. If age disaggregation were included for an additional 6 Sustainable Development Goal indicators, related to nutrition, access to safe drinking water, sanitation, energy, transport, and ownership of a mobile phone, this number would rise to 26.

16. Finally, an analysis of youth-relevant indicators by tiers[11] reveals a fairly balanced distribution, with 30 per cent pertaining to tier I, 41 per cent to tier II and 28 per cent to tier III. The tier I youth-relevant indicators relate mostly to youth health, education and employment, on which data have been extensively collected for many years, while tier III youth-relevant indicators pertain to more recent statistical fields, such as a youth-enabling environment, climate change or governance.

[10] See E/CN.5/2013/8.

[11] To facilitate the implementation of the global indicator framework, its indicators are classified by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators into three tiers on the basis of their level of methodological development and the availability of data at the global level. Further information about the tier classification is available from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/.

B. The role of the Sustainable Development Goals in implementing the World Programme of Action for Youth

1. The global indicator framework: leaving no youth behind

17. The global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals offers the potential to gather more robust information on the situation of youth, which in turn could support better implementation of the World Programme of Action through enhanced evidence-based youth policies. For example, although suicide and accidental death from self-harm is the third leading cause of death among young women and young men,[12] being particularly acute among indigenous youth,[13] it is an issue that is often neglected in youth policies. Therefore, the language of Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4, on mental health and well-being, which goes beyond the World Programme of Action proposal for action, offers greater potential for a more effective response to youth mental health issues.

18. Youth poverty is a key topic of both the World Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, the global indicator framework will allow for two perspectives on youth poverty not covered in the Programme of Action: (a) young people living below the international poverty line (with the data disaggregated by sex, employment status and geographical location); and (b) youth poverty in all its dimensions.

19. Another example relates to youth mortality. While the World Programme of Action indicators track five causes of mortality (maternal causes, road traffic accidents, homicide and conflict-related and self-inflicted injury), the global indicator framework includes those five causes and adds four: (a) household and ambient air pollution; (b) unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene; (c) unintentional poisoning; and (iv) disasters.

20. Youth-related data will be provided on a wide array of issues that were not measured with World Programme of Action indicators, such as gender-based violence, gender parity in average hourly earnings, time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, researchers, missing persons and trafficking, safety perception when walking alone, or number of positions in public institutions.

21. The use of such data could strengthen the evidence for effective implementation of the World Programme of Action. For example, global information about youth access to finance services (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 8.10.2) could open up new perspectives in terms of youth financial literacy and inclusion policies.

22. An overwhelming majority of the indicators measuring the sociodemographic situation of young people are disaggregated not only by sex and age, but also by other factors, such as geographical location and indigenous or disability status. This will provide a wealth of information about specific youth groups, such as adolescent girls and young women, indigenous youth, youth with disabilities and young migrants. In that context, some indicators related to parity provide an important snapshot of the diversity of the situation of youth. Such indicators might prove essential in measuring the impact of inclusive youth policies.

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[12] See *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.15.XVII.8). Available from https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/WorldsWomen2015_report.pdf.

[13] See E/2017/43-E/C.19/2017/11.

2. Beyond the global indicator framework: age disaggregation at the national level

23. The Statistical Commission has repeatedly highlighted the importance of disaggregation of data by age. In March 2017, a city group on ageing and age-disaggregated data was established by an informal group of national statistical offices and United Nations system and civil society organizations.[14]

24. As noted above, the global indicator framework includes 18 indicators that can be considered highly relevant to youth but currently are not disaggregated by age at the global level and do not reflect defined methodologies.

25. Access for youth to land and employment opportunities for youth in agriculture are key points of the World Programme of Action for which no indicators exist. The corresponding Sustainable Development Goal target 2.3, on agricultural productivity, does not specifically mention youth, while indicator 2.3.2, on the average income of small-scale food producers, is not disaggregated by age. Such gaps in monitoring highlight the importance of ensuring that additional work on age disaggregation can be undertaken at the global and national levels in the coming years, allowing for enhanced monitoring of World Programme of Action priorities through the Sustainable Development Goals.

26. Adequate global collection and analysis on a number of topics important for youth development are not included in the frameworks. For example, while technical and vocational education and training are mentioned in the preamble of the 2030 Agenda and the narrative of the World Programme of Action, there is no specific target or indicator related to those activities. This is also the case with other World Programme of Action priorities, such as leisure-time activities and armed conflict.

27. The Sustainable Development Goals also cover issues that were not fully considered in the priorities of the World Programme of Action. Goals related to sustainable agriculture, inequalities, sustainable consumption and production, life below water or life on land could broaden the scope of youth policies, while additional national targets such as social protection for young people, young people's resilience to disaster and the representation of young women in national parliaments, local governments or managerial positions could also enhance the implementation of the World Programme of Action.

28. Some indicators are relevant to youth issues but are not disaggregated by age in the global indicator framework. It might be useful for national Sustainable Development Goals monitoring frameworks to include, where feasible, age disaggregation for indicators such as informal employment or violence against young journalists, activists, trade unionists and human rights advocates. In addition, indicators regarding enabling environments for development, such as primary school facilities,[15] could be expanded to measure secondary and tertiary education facilities so as to better assess the situation of youth education.

C. The role of the World Programme of Action in advancing youth development through the Sustainable Development Goals

29. The World Programme of Action remains a useful international framework for guiding youth policies, as it includes topics key to youth development that are not fully considered in the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the World Programme of Action indicators on youth health offer more robust information than

[14] See E/2017/24-E/CN.3/2017/35.

[15] See Sustainable Development Goal indicator 4.a.1.

those contained in the Goals. Although Member States have repeatedly[16] emphasized the need to increase youth awareness about nutrition, including eating disorders and obesity, it is currently not measured within the global indicator framework, as indicators 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 refer only to children under 5. The World Programme of Action indicators monitoring the percentage of young people considered to be underweight and overweight could inform targeted youth health policies.

30. With respect to substance abuse, the World Programme of Action indicator "Number of youth held in custody by civil authorities in connection with drug-related crimes" complements Sustainable Development Goal indicator 3.5.1, on substance abuse prevention and rehabilitation, capturing the interlinkages between substance abuse and juvenile justice.

31. Several Sustainable Development Goal indicators related to energy, water and transportation are not disaggregated by age, while the World Programme of Action indicators measure youth access to energy, water and transportation. Given that adolescent girls and young women, in particular in rural areas of developing countries, often continue to be excluded from education owing to the water burden and that diarrhoeal diseases are the fifth leading cause of death among young women aged 15-29,[14] the inclusion of age disaggregation regarding access to safe drinking water and sanitation in national Sustainable Development Goal indicator frameworks could prove useful. Similar recommendations can be formulated with respect to access to energy and transportation, as crucial enablers for education, employment and poverty eradication (all of which are World Programme of Action priorities).

32. The World Programme of Action priority of globalization includes migration, an issue central to youth development, as nearly 22 million international migrants are between 15 and 24 years of age[17] and 20 per cent of the global youth population in that age range were willing to move permanently to another country.[18] While the Sustainable Development Goal indicators related to migration (10.7.2 and 8.8.1) do not provide information about young migrants, World Programme of Action indicators on youth migrants and student mobility could be useful in monitoring the impact of migration policies on youth.

33. In addition, with regard to youth access to housing, while a wealth of information about youth living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing will be made available through Sustainable Development Goal indicator 11.1.1, youth homelessness is not captured in that indicator. Youth homelessness, an important issue in some countries, might be captured by using World Programme of Action indicator 13, "Percentage of youth deprived of adequate shelter".

D. Mainstreaming of youth into environmental issues of the Sustainable Development Goals

34. Under the 2030 Agenda, greater progress in integrating the social, economic and environmental components of youth development is under way, although additional efforts are needed, in particular regarding the mainstreaming of youth-specific dimensions into environmental policies.

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[16] See General Assembly resolutions 66/121 (para. 14), 68/130 (para. 6) and 70/127 (para. 8).

[17] See *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision* (United Nations, 2015).

[18] See *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Youth 2016* (International Labour Organization, 2016).

35. Indeed, it is worth underlining that the targets and indicators of Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15 do not include social development or youth-specific dimensions, while the nexus between human well-being and oceans, for example, have been well documented.[19] Sustainable tourism and fishery industries can provide social inclusion opportunities, through job opportunities for youth,[20] in particular those living in coastal areas and small island developing States.

36. Youth can also play an instrumental role in their local communities in the sustainable management of natural resources. While several Sustainable Development Goal targets, such as 6.b, on water and sanitation management, and 15.c, on sustainable livelihood opportunities, refer to local communities (including young people), there are no indicators measuring youth contributions.

III. Implementing the World Programme of Action for Youth to achieve sustainable development

A. New youth policies, programmes and laws

37. The development of youth policies and strategies is a priority for Member States that enables them to target the specific needs and challenges of youth. In recent years, a number of States have developed or updated national youth policies.[21] In China, the milestone medium- and long-term youth development programme (2016-2025) is the first set of national guidelines for youth development. Changing political contexts in some States can result in lengthy youth policy formulation processes (for example, Cambodia and the State of Palestine).

38. Furthermore, the number and the range of sectoral youth-related policies[22] have increased in recent years. Member States[23] have developed youth employment policies), including, in the case of Sweden, a national strategy on youth not in employment, education or training. Youth sexual reproductive health and youth health policies have been developed in Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique and Sri Lanka, while Mozambique and Zimbabwe have formulated strategies for preventing child marriage. Safety and juvenile justice policies have been developed in China and Poland, while Nepal has developed a national youth vision for 2025. Ireland has developed the world's first national strategy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex young people.

39. Member States have also modified their youth normative frameworks by passing either general youth laws (El Salvador, Madagascar and Montenegro) or issue-specific ones. Among these, Austria has made education or training compulsory until age 18, while Trinidad and Tobago has banned child marriage.

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[19] See *Global Sustainable Development Report 2015* (United Nations, 2015) and "Mapping the linkages between oceans and other Sustainable Development Goals: a preliminary exploration" (ST/ESA/2017/DWP/149) (United Nations, 2017).

[20] See "Youth and development of aquaculture and livestock in Africa" (ARC/14/INF/8) (FAO, 2014).

[21] Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, China, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana, Madagascar, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Somalia, the Sudan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uganda and the State of Palestine.

[22] Further information about the efforts of Member States to implement World Programme of Action priorities, including girls and young women, employment, education, health and youth in conflict, is available from www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay/2017/part3-implementing-wpay2017-lv.pdf.

[23] Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Mexico, Samoa, Sweden and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

India has adopted a child labour act and ratified two related ILO conventions, while Colombia has adopted a youth employment and entrepreneurship act. Youth participation acts have also been adopted in the Republic of Moldova and the Sudan, while Liberia, through its equal representation and participation act, has reserved one seat in Parliament for youth. In Ecuador, the rights and diversity of youth are recognized in the Constitution, together with additional youth-specific rights, such as the right of young people to integrate into the labour market in just and decent conditions.

40. Efforts have also been undertaken to mainstream youth into sectoral policies, such as in the areas of health (in Poland), civic engagement (in France) and human security (in El Salvador, Germany and Switzerland).

41. Member States have recognized the diversity of youth by identifying different groups of youth in youth policies or in specifically targeted programmes: poor and excluded youth, homeless and street youth, youth with disabilities, indigenous youth, young refugees and other young migrants, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex youth, young people in conflict with the law, informally organized or non-organized youth, young substance abusers and youth affected by natural disasters.

42. A steady and consensual commitment to youth issues and consistent support for youth policies, with reviews conducted on a regular basis, can be regarded as major achievements.[24]

B. Youth in national sustainable development efforts

43. The cross-fertilization of youth development and sustainable development policies has been undertaken by Member States through a two-pronged approach: the mainstreaming of youth into national sustainable development plans, and the mainstreaming of sustainable development into youth policies.

44. Many Member States have included youth-related outcomes in their localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially by analysing the contribution made by youth policy to the Goals.[25] This endeavour has been particularly visible in the national sustainable development strategies of Chad, Egypt, Germany and Mauritania.

45. Governmental entities responsible for youth, such as youth ministries, are also part of national Sustainable Development Goals coordination groups (in Austria, Azerbaijan, the Dominican Republic and the Philippines), and some of these mechanisms include young representatives (in Belgium, Finland and Slovenia). Young people have participated in the national voluntary review reports in the Netherlands and Peru, where youth organizations independently wrote part of the reports.

46. Member States have engaged with young people to support the formulation and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (Montenegro, Serbia and the Sudan), with a National Youth Summit on Climate Change organized in Canada. Communication strategies to inform young people about the Goals are also high on the agendas of some Member States (Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Serbia and Switzerland), with Belgium supporting campaigns conducted by young people themselves.

[24] Such commitment and support have been demonstrated by Austria, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Finland, Montenegro and Serbia.

[25] Austria, Finland, Hungary, the Philippines, Poland, Serbia and the Sudan.

47. At the regional level, several intergovernmental organizations have made youth a priority in their sustainable development efforts. The Ibero-American Pact for Youth, endorsed by 22 Heads of States, positions youth development within the Sustainable Development Goals as its first priority, through the development of regional youth targets and indicators. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has organized a regional dialogue on youth participation in the implementation of the Goals.

48. A number of Member States have mainstreamed the Sustainable Development Goals into their national youth policies and programmes.[26]

49. Youth-led organizations themselves can play a strong role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, through awareness-raising, training and volunteerism (for example, the European Youth Forum).

C. Strengthening institutional arrangements for youth

50. In addition to strengthening youth governmental entities, Member States are pursuing policy coordination as a key element of ensuring the implementation of youth policies at all levels.

1. Strengthened youth governmental institutions

51. Some Governments have recognized youth work and built the capacities of youth workers.[27] While Peru has reformed its institution dealing with youth, the Dominican Republic and Senegal have strengthened their youth ministries by adopting internal strategic plans.

52. Other achievements have included the increased investment in youth in national budgets (in the case of El Salvador) and the impact produced by youth programmes, which has led, for example, to a reduced number of youth not in employment, education or training in Poland. More effective delivery of youth services has been achieved by creating dedicated spaces for youth networks (in Argentina, Chile and the Dominican Republic) or supporting such spaces(in Azerbaijan, Mauritania and Trinidad and Tobago). Uruguay has launched a "youth card", which offers a full package of services, benefits and discounts for youth. Lebanon is about to launch a similar card, which already exists in Chile, Colombia and many European countries.

2. Strengthened coordination on youth

53. Many Member States host intergovernmental youth coordination mechanisms, either through dedicated structures or through participation in sectoral mechanisms. Youth ministries have made renewed efforts in their coordination missions thanks to specific mechanisms.[28] France has created a youth policy advisory board, directly reporting to the Prime Minister, whose goal is to ensure the consistency of youth policy. In El Salvador, the youth coordination mechanism includes two new members: the Ministry of the Environment and Natural resources and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. Mexico has established its first interministerial coordination mechanism on youth data. In some countries, coordination tasks have involved subnational authorities (Sweden and Switzerland) and other stakeholders,

[26] Austria, Azerbaijan, Côte d'Ivoire, Hungary, Ireland and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

[27] The Governments of Austria, Armenia, Chile, China, Ecuador, Finland, the Netherlands, Qatar and Slovenia.

[28] In China, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Georgia, Germany, Malawi, Serbia, the Sudan and Uruguay.

such as the private sector, indigenous peoples, youth experts and youth organizations (Chile, Côte d'Ivoire and Serbia), with Austria and Azerbaijan gathering stakeholders together in annual youth forums.

54. To ensure youth mainstreaming, youth governmental institutions are engaged in other intergovernmental coordination mechanisms, such as on gender (in Mexico and Uruguay), bullying (in China) and citizen security (in El Salvador). The Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth of Austria provides youth training to other governmental institutions.

55. Coordination and mainstreaming efforts have resulted in a stronger commitment to youth policies on the part of other ministries (in Austria, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic and Serbia) and a recognition of the role of the youth ministry, in particular its coordination function (in Hungary and Turkey).

56. Local youth policies and programmes have been central to the efforts of several Member States. Some have partnered with local authorities (China, Germany and Sri Lanka), especially by granting financial means for them to provide local youth services (Argentina, Poland, the Republic of Moldova and Uruguay) or by creating a framework for youth development at the subnational level (Cambodia). Sweden ensures the exchange of knowledge about youth programmes among local authorities.

3. Challenges

57. Many achievements are highlighted above, from the expanded coverage and enhanced quality of youth services to the mainstreaming of youth into sectoral policies. Nevertheless, Member States also point out the challenges that continue to prevent the full implementation of the World Programme of Action.

58. Youth policies and their implementation are affected by the broader environment, including the political climate, humanitarian crises, uneven local development, budget cuts and competing priorities. In countries where the electoral participation of young people is declining and/or in ageing societies, the political influence of young people is also shrinking. That in turn can have a negative impact on the degree of priority given by politicians to youth and the development of youth policy.

59. Ongoing challenges that youth policies struggle to address include those related to high levels of youth unemployment and underemployment; alcohol and substance abuse; gender inequality; migration; and the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

60. Maintaining a holistic youth development perspective, including investing in culture, sports and civic engagement, can be difficult when one issue is particularly acute, such as youth unemployment.

61. Challenges to the implementation of youth policies range from coordination difficulties and constraints on financial resources to resistance from government entities that do not traditionally engage in youth mainstreaming. The diversity of youth sometimes makes it difficult to respond to their evolving and multifaceted needs. This can pose challenges to the creation of effective channels for the participation of youth, in particular vulnerable and marginalized young people. Moreover, in some ministries, including youth ministries, inadequate human resources and capacity to address youth issues reflect a lack of curricula in this area in many countries, as well as a lack of recognition of work on youth more broadly.

62. There is confusion among some stakeholders between "youth development", which refers to the well-being of youth, and "youth in development", which refers

to the participation of youth in all aspects of society and means that youth should be engaged not only in youth policy but in all policies as full members of society.

D. Youth participation

63. Establishing legally recognized youth participation mechanisms is essential for high-quality participation by youth. Many countries have continued their support for such mechanisms at the national and local levels,[29] while others have created or are creating new ones.[30] Member States highlight the effectiveness of combining both in-person and online avenues for participation.

64. Youth participation is considered instrumental in all stages of the youth policymaking process. For example, youth have been consulted during the formulation stage of forthcoming federal accessibility legislation in Canada, the employment policy in El Salvador, the demographic strategy in Germany and the forthcoming youth strategy in the European Union. El Salvador recently included youth in the management board of the national entity in charge of youth policy, while Canada has included youth in the review of its international assistance policy.

65. Moreover, youth participation is facilitated and strengthened by the mediation function of youth-led organizations. Financial and capacity-building support is provided to youth organizations in a number of Member States.[31] Targeted support has been provided to indigenous youth organizations, student-led organizations and non-organized youth.[32]

66. Youth participation in decision-making at the international level has made significant progress in recent years, with more Member States including young people as part of their national delegations to the United Nations. In 2016, more than 60 delegates from more than 35 Member States attended the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, with Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, Chad, Czechia, Eritrea, Hungary and the United Arab Emirates launching their United Nations youth delegate programmes. Another notable development has been the inclusion of youth delegates not only in the Commission for Social Development but also in the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as in other United Nations processes and forums, such as the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), the World Health Assembly and the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum.

67. Closely linked to youth participation, a renewed interest in strengthening youth civic engagement and volunteerism has been noted,[33] with new youth civic services created in Canada and Côte d'Ivoire.

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[29] Austria, Belgium, Brazil, China, Chile, Ecuador, Germany, Mexico, Portugal, Sri Lanka and Uruguay.

[30] Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Senegal and the Sudan.

[31] Azerbaijan, Chile, China, Ecuador, Mexico, Serbia, Slovenia, Uruguay and the members of the European Union.

[32] In Belgium, Canada, Chile, Ecuador and El Salvador.

[33] In Chile, China, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hungary, Kuwait, the Philippines and Poland.

E. Youth data, research and evidence-based policy orientation

68. The monitoring and evaluation of youth policies have been bolstered,[34] including through innovative monitoring tools (in Ireland). Other examples are external evaluations on education (in Australia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and the introduction of youth vulnerability indices, which allow for targeted interventions with respect to marginalized youth (in Chile).

69. The amount of information about the situation of young people has increased significantly in recent years, owing in particular to improved disaggregation of data (in Austria, the Dominican Republic and Montenegro), in particular with respect to young women (in Chile, Finland, Greece and Senegal). In Mexico, an innovative partnership with the national statistical agency has resulted in the inclusion of four new indicators in the national statistical framework: youth informal employment rate, youth monthly earnings, youth lacking access to social security, and youth leaving school to start a family. While Malawi has launched a new youth information system, Uruguay has created a dedicated youth data website, where the results of the third national questionnaire on youth can be downloaded in open data formats.

70. This newly generated or newly accessible information has been complemented by data analysis and studies about the general youth situation (in Germany, Malawi and the Sudan) or about specific topics, such indigenous youth (in Australia and the Philippines), young refugees (in Canada), young women's mental health (in the Netherlands), the sexual exploitation of young people (in Switzerland) and care work from a gender and generational perspective (in Uruguay). Mexico and Uruguay have created dedicated units on youth studies within their youth-related public entities.

71. Participation by youth in monitoring and research has attracted growing attention, with indigenous youth participating in studies in Canada and young researchers being trained in Lebanon.

72. An important development in the field of youth data has been the creation of national youth development indices,[35] supported by the work undertaken by the Commonwealth Secretariat. India is now producing subnational youth development indices. Recently, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations developed its own regional Youth Development Index, which covers its 10 member States.

73. Despite the important progress made, additional efforts are required in order to obtain better disaggregated data on youth, in particular marginalized youth, and to measure youth participation and civic engagement.

IV. Multiplying efforts in the United Nations

74. United Nations entities actively supported Member States and young people in achieving youth development objectives. In 2016, the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development, a network of more than 50 United Nations entities, presented its global report[36] on United Nations work on youth carried out through the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth. The report articulated an

[34] In China, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, India, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia, Switzerland, Uganda and Uruguay.

[35] In Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico and the Philippines.

[36] Available from www.unyouthswap.org/resources.

initial global, coordinated and multisectoral vision on United Nations support for youth policies and the youth sector.

75. Led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNDP, the 2016 report has been instrumental in terms of taking stock of recent and ongoing United Nations work on youth. It is also seen as a useful baseline and an advocacy tool to further increase coherence and coordination on youth within the United Nations system at all levels. Findings show, for example, that a majority of United Nations country teams prioritize youth in their programming and that the United Nations system has supported 101 countries in formulating youth employment and development frameworks, action plans and policies.

76. System-wide advocacy efforts and attention to youth engagement have also been further strengthened through the appointment, in June 2017, of a new Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth.

Youth in the 2030 Agenda

77. United Nations support for Member States in monitoring the youth dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals has assumed various forms. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with a range of partners, has developed the adolescent country tracker, an outcome-based framework and a proposed set of indicators closely linked to the Goals, in order to describe the state of the world's adolescents. ECLAC is supporting the development of youth-related indicators and a related toolkit for youth organizations.

78. The United Nations has also provided strong support for evidence-based youth policies, in particular through an important global inter-agency partnership on capacity-building and regional dialogues, led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Regional capacity-building workshops conducted in five regions and on four continents have targeted more than 75 Member States and hundreds of participants from youth ministries and youth-led organizations. Among other activities, the children and youth major group has been facilitating processes to enable local youth groups to become engaged with respect to national and regional disaster risk reduction plans, including through youth-led peer-reviewed science policy publications.

Youth in armed conflict situations, including conflict prevention, protection, peacebuilding and post-conflict processes

79. While the World Programme of Action includes a focus on youth and armed conflict, Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, was the first Council resolution wholly dedicated to the important and positive role that young women and men play in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. To support its implementation, several tools have been developed, including a global platform, Youth4Peace.info, developed by UNDP, which has supported youth-related peacebuilding initiatives in various countries.[37]

80. Work has been undertaken on progress study, mandated in Security Council 2250 (2015), on the positive contribution of young people to peace processes and conflict resolution, in particular through regional and national consultations with young peacebuilders.[38]

[37] Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi and Panama.

[38] In Asia and the Arab Region and in Colombia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

81. The Department of Political Affairs has promoted youth engagement with respect to electoral processes by involving them as voters and candidates as well as agents of voter education, registration staff and polling officials.

Youth employment

82. The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, launched in February 2016 under the leadership of ILO, brings together 22 United Nations entities in an effort to expand country-level action to promote decent jobs for young people through evidence-based interventions and knowledge and multi-stakeholder partnerships, contributing to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and targets related to youth employment. In September 2016, the Secretary-General appointed a Special Envoy on Youth Employment to advance the Global Initiative and support the promotion of effective youth employment strategies. Moreover, several new joint programmes on youth empowerment and employment have been developed (in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Samoa and Somalia). In Ethiopia, UNIDO has supported youth-led entrepreneurship in strategic industries with high growth and job creation potential. In the Philippines, ITU has supported coding training to enhance employment opportunities for youth in the field of technology.

83. FAO supports more than 20 countries through activities to promote youth agricultural employment, in particular through its Integrated Country Approach in Guatemala, Senegal and Uganda. In 2016, FAO launched an online policy database on employment and decent work in rural areas.[39]

84. IOM has provided economic opportunities for vulnerable young migrants, mobile populations and youth at risk.[40]

Youth health

85. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has supported the implementation of the Caribbean Community Integrated Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy. Many initiatives have been undertaken to address adolescent pregnancy, including in Ghana, Guyana and Myanmar. UNICEF-supported HIV prevention interventions have reached more than 1 million adolescents and young people in Côte d'Ivoire. In Uganda, UNFPA and UNICEF have launched two joint programmes on accelerating efforts to end female genital mutilation and child marriage.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

86. While the implementation of the 2030 Agenda could broaden the scope of youth policies and increase the amount of available information about youth, the World Programme of Action remains a useful international framework for guiding youth policies, as it includes topics key to youth development that are not fully considered in the Sustainable Development Goals. In the light of the inputs received from Member States, United Nations entities and youth-led civil society organizations, the following actions by States are recommended:

(a) **Develop and strengthen existing evidence-based national policies for youth development and coherent cross-sectoral efforts in line with the World Programme of Action for Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;**

[39] http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/policies/en/.

[40] In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Djibouti, Iraq, Kenya, Mauritania, the Niger, Panama, Somalia, Uganda and Yemen.

(b) Prioritize and commit adequate resources for the implementation of youth-related policies, including youth participation in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages;

(c) Mainstream the perspectives of youth, in particular marginalized youth groups, into all policies and programmes, carried out at all levels by all governmental departments, to ensure the effective implementation of the World Programme of Action and that no youth are left behind;

(d) Strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices to design, collect and analyse age-disaggregated data so as to contribute effectively to follow-up, reporting and accountability for the achievement of the youth dimensions of the 2030 Agenda.

Annex

Indicators relevant to youth development and well-being in the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1 (No poverty)

1.1.1 Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)

1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age

1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, new-borns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable

1.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)

1.b.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups

Goal 2 (Zero hunger)

2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)

2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status

Goal 3 (Good health and well-being)

3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio

3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel

3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations

3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate

3.5.1 Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders

3.5.2 Harmful use of alcohol, defined according to the national context as alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol

3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries

3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods

3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group

3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)

3.9.1 Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution

3.9.2 Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) services)

3.9.3 Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning

3.a.1 Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older

3.b.1 Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme

Goal 4 (Quality education)

4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex

4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex

4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill

4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated

4.6.1 Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex

4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment

4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)

4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study

4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country

Goal 5 (Gender equality)

5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age

5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence

5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18

5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age

5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments

5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions

5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care

5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education

5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex

5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment

Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation)

6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services

6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water

6.b.1 Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management

Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy)

7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity

7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology

Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth)

8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex

8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities

8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training

8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5 17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age

8.8.1 Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status

8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider

8.b.1 Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or as part of a national development strategy

Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure)

9.1.1 Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road

9.5.2 Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants

9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology

Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities)

10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

10.3.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

10.7.2 Number of countries that have implemented well-managed migration policies

Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities)

11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing

11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

11.5.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

11.7.1 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

11.7.2 Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months

Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production)

12.8.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development (including climate change education) are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment

Goal 13 (Climate action)

13.1.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population

13.3.1 Number of countries that have integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula

13.b.1 Number of least developed countries and small island developing States that are receiving specialized support, and amount of support, including finance, technology and capacity-building, for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions)

16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age

16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause

16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months

16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live

16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month

16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation

16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18 29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18

16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms

16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population

16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months

16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services

16.7.1 Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions

16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group

16.10.1 Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months

16.a.1 Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles

16.b.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)

17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the Internet

17.18.1 Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

United Nations A/72/191

General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 July 2017

Original: English

Seventy-second session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the seventy-second session

Observer status for the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism in the General Assembly

Letter dated 25 July 2017 from the representatives of Belarus, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II) are attached to the present letter.

We should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Andrei **Dapkiunas**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus

(*Signed*) **Liu** Jieyi
Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China

(*Signed*) Syed **Akbaruddin**
Permanent Representative of India

(*Signed*) Kairat **Umarov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan

(*Signed*) Mirgul **Moldoisaeva**
Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic

17-12990 (E) 030817

Please recycle

(*Signed*) Petr **Ilichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation

(*Signed*) Mahmadamin **Mahmadaminov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan

(*Signed*) Aksoltan **Ataeva**
Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan

(Signed) Bakhtiyor **Ibragimov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

The Agreement on the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism was signed by the Governments of the Republic of Belarus, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan in Moscow on 16 June 2011, by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Moscow on 4 July 2011 and by the Government of the Republic of India in Xiamen, People's Republic of China, on 24 November 2011 and entered into force on 28 March 2012.

In accordance with article 1 of the Agreement, the Group is a regional intergovernmental organization, the primary goal of which is to ensure effective interaction and cooperation at the regional level and integration of its member States into the international system of anti-money-laundering and combating financing of terrorism in accordance with the Financial Action Task Force international standards and the anti-money-laundering and combating financing of terrorism standards of other international organizations to which the States members of the Group are party.

The main bodies of the Group are the plenary meeting and the secretariat.

The main tasks of the Group are:

- Assisting member States in implementing the Financial Action Task Force international standards in the field of combating money-laundering and terrorist financing
- Developing and conducting joint activities aimed at combating money-laundering and terrorist financing
- Implementing a programme of mutual evaluations of member States on the basis of the Financial Action Task Force international standards, including assessment of the effectiveness of legislative and other measures adopted in the sphere of efforts to combat money-laundering and terrorist financing
- Coordinating international cooperation and technical assistance programmes with specialized international organizations, bodies and interested States
- Analysing money-laundering and terrorist financing trends (typologies) and exchanging best practices for combating such crimes, taking into account regional specifics

Currently there are nine member States: the Republic of Belarus, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Membership in the Group is open to other countries of the Eurasian region sharing its goals and principles, on terms agreed upon by the member States in the course of the plenary meeting. It is also envisaged that any interested State or organization may obtain observer status in the Group.

It should be noted that, in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations. the Agreement on the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism was registered with the United Nations Secretariat under registration No. 66716 on 28 June 2016.

Granting permanent observer status to the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism in the General Assembly will promote effective cooperation between the Group and the United Nations on a regular and orderly basis in the interests of both organizations and their member States.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism,

1. *Decides* to invite the Eurasian Group on Combating Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the action necessary to implement the present resolution.

United Nations A/72/191*

General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 July 2017

Original: English

Seventy-second session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the seventy-second session

Observer status for the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism in the General Assembly

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We should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Andrei **Dapkiunas**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus

(*Signed*) **Liu** Jieyi
Permanent Kepresentative of the People's Republic of China

(*Signed*) Syed **Akbaruddin**
Permanent Representative of India

(*Signed*) Kairat **Umarov**
Pcrmanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan

(*Signed*) Mirgul **Moldoisaeva**
Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic

* Reissued for technical reasons on 15 August 2017.

17-12990* (E) 160817

Please recycle

(*Signed*) Petr **Ilichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation

(*Signed*) Mahmadamin **Mahmadaminov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan

(*Signed*) Aksoltan **Ataeva**
Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan

(Signed) Bakhtiyor **Ibragimov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

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Membership in the Group is open to other countries of the Eurasian region sharing its goals and principles, on terms agreed upon by the member States in the course of the plenary meeting. It is also envisaged that any interested State or organization may obtain observer status in the Group.

It should be noted that, in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Agreement on the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism was registered with the United Nations Secretariat under registration No. 66716 on 28 June 2016.

Granting permanent observer status to the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism in the General Assembly will promote effective cooperation between the Group and the United Nations on a regular and orderly basis in the interests of both organizations and their member States.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism,

1. *Decides* to invite the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the action necessary to implement the present resolution.

United Nations A/72/192

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 August 2017

Original: English

Seventy-second session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the seventy-second session

The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity

Letter dated 11 August 2017 from the Permanent Representatives of Australia and Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Permanent Mission of Australia and the Permanent Mission of Ghana, we have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity".

In accordance with annex IV, paragraph 18, to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we request that the item be referred to the plenary of the Assembly. It is not our intention that a resolution be adopted as a result of the General Assembly's consideration of this item during the seventy-second session.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum is attached to this letter (see annex).

We have the further honour to request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Gillian **Bird**
Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Martha Ama Akyaa **Pobee**
Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations

17-13888 (E) 160817

Please recycle

Annex

Explanatory memorandum

The responsibility to protect was enshrined in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome adopted by Heads of State and Government in 2005.

The World Summit Outcome provides that:

> 138. Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability.
>
> 139. The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In this context, we are prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We stress the need for the General Assembly to continue consideration of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and its implications, bearing in mind the principles of the Charter and international law. We also intend to commit ourselves, as necessary and appropriate, to helping States build capacity to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and to assisting those which are under stress before crises and conflicts break out.

The General Assembly adopted the 2005 World Summit Outcome in resolution 60/1.

In January 2009, the then Secretary-General submitted the first report on the subject, entitled "Implementing the responsibility to protect" (A/63/677). The Secretary-General wrote that paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome suggest that the responsibility to protect rests on three pillars: the protection responsibilities of the State (pillar one); international assistance and capacity-building (pillar two); and timely and decisive response (pillar three).

The Secretary-General's report was considered in the General Assembly's first — and to date only — debate on the responsibility to protect later that year. In its resolution 63/308, the General Assembly took note of the Secretary-General's report and its debate, and decided to continue its consideration of the responsibility to protect.

Despite this decision, eight years have now passed without the General Assembly further considering the responsibility to protect.

And yet, as we are reminded on an almost daily basis, the need to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity is as pressing as ever.

While the annual informal interactive dialogue on the responsibility to protect has an important role to play, including as an opportunity for civil society to express views, we consider it important for the General Assembly to fulfil the role that was foreseen for it in the 2005 World Summit Outcome and resolution 63/308.

A General Assembly debate would allow all Member States to record their views on the responsibility to protect. This should in turn enable Member States to find more common ground in relation to how best to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

We hope that, through the sharing of experiences, the General Assembly will be able to identify prevention success stories, thereby highlighting prevention strategies that are effective. We also hope that, through a constructive dialogue, we will be able to build confidence to enable Member States to identify challenges to the responsibility to protect when they face them, and to ask for assistance when they need it.

The Secretary-General has identified prevention as the priority for the United Nations, and has signalled that the responsibility to protect is a key component of that agenda. As the Secretary-General himself put it in his report of August 2017 entitled "Implementing the responsibility to protect: accountability for prevention" (A/71/1016-S/2017/556), genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity "impose a particularly heavy toll on humanity and their prevention is at the heart of my overall prevention agenda". In his report, the Secretary-General underlined the need for a "continuous, frank and inclusive dialogue" on the responsibility to protect. To this end, one of the 14 recommendations in the Secretary-General's report is that States consider placing a specific item on prevention and the responsibility to protect on the agenda of the General Assembly.

We hope that, just as the membership has rallied around the Secretary-General with strong expressions of support for his prevention agenda, Member States will support the inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly of an item on the responsibility to protect.

Ultimately, in proposing this supplementary agenda item, our goal is to foster dialogue and help to build consensus in relation to what the United Nations and Member States need to do to prevent these heinous crimes.

United Nations A/72/193

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 August 2017

Original: English

Seventy-second session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the seventy-second session

Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova

Letter dated 11 August 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request, upon instructions received from my Government, and in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the seventy-second session of the Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum concerning the request is attached to the present letter (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Victor **Moraru**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova

17-13912 (E) 170817

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Annex

Explanatory memorandum

After regaining its independence, the Republic of Moldova was admitted to membership in the United Nations in 1992, during the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, as a sovereign and independent State.

Twenty-five years later, foreign military forces remain stationed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova without its consent. The Republic of Moldova considers the presence of these foreign military forces to be a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Government of the Republic of Moldova requests, in accordance with Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations, that the matter of the complete withdrawal of these foreign military forces from its territory be included as a separate item in the agenda of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

No State must be allowed to hinder the application of the principle of international law to the effect that military forces may not be stationed on the territory of another State without its consent.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova has attempted to secure the complete withdrawal of the foreign military forces on its territory through regional efforts. In Istanbul, in November 1999, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) made the following declaration:

> "Recalling the decisions of the Budapest and Lisbon Summits and Oslo Ministerial Meeting, we reiterate our expectation of an early, orderly and complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova. In this context, we welcome the recent progress achieved in the removal and destruction of the Russian military equipment stockpiled in the Trans-Dniestrian region of Moldova and the completion of the destruction of non-transportable ammunition. We welcome the commitment by the Russian Federation to complete withdrawal of the Russian forces from the territory of Moldova by the end of 2002. We also welcome the willingness of the Republic of Moldova and of the OSCE to facilitate this process, within their respective abilities, by the agreed deadline".

Since the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit declaration, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has continued efforts, in various formats, on the subject of the complete withdrawal of the foreign military forces from its territory. To date, these efforts have been largely unsuccessful.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova, concerned with the threat to international peace and security arising from the presence of foreign troops on its territory and mindful that the United Nations has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, requests the support of the United Nations for efforts to conclude, without further delay, the process of unconditional, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from its national territory.

The inclusion of this matter in the agenda of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly would constitute a highly needed application of preventive diplomacy in a region where the maintenance of international peace and security may be threatened.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova suggests that the agenda item entitled "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova" be referred to the plenary of the General Assembly.

United Nations A/72/194

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 August 2017

Original: English

Seventy-second session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the seventy-second session

Observer status for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat in the General Assembly

Note verbale dated 11 August 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, on behalf of Australia, Kenya, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America and Uruguay, the inclusion in the agenda of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat in the General Assembly".

It is noted that Uruguay currently holds the position of Chair of the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and that the above-mentioned Member States are members of the Standing Committee.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II) are attached to the present letter.

The Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations requests the circulation of the present letter and its annexes as a document of the General Assembly.

17-13981 (E) 180817

Please recycle

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

Observer status for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat in the General Assembly

This explanatory memorandum sets out the reasons why the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat should be granted the status of Permanent Observer in the General Assembly.

The memorandum is divided into three sections, each of which outlines why the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands constitutes an intergovernmental organization whose activities cover matters of interest to the General Assembly (the two criteria for accreditation as a Permanent Observer are stipulated in General Assembly decision 49/426 of 9 December 1994). Accordingly, these sections are as follows:

1. Introduction and background
2. Status as an intergovernmental organization
3. Ramsar Convention and matters of interest to the General Assembly

1. Introduction and background

Constitution:

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (herein referred to as the "Ramsar Convention on Wetlands") was concluded at Ramsar, Islamic Republic of Iran, on 2 February 1971. Its purpose, as stated in the preamble, is "to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands now and in the future".

In accordance with its article 10, the Convention entered into force on 21 December 1975, four months after seven States had become Parties to the Convention.

The Convention has been amended twice: by a Protocol of 3 December 1982; and by the adoption of amendments on 28 May 1987.

Depositary:

The Depositary of the Convention on Wetlands is the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which registered the Convention at the United Nations on 17 February 1976 (registration number 14583).

Bodies of the Convention:

Article 6 of the Convention on Wetlands establishes a Conference of the Contracting Parties to review and promote the implementation of the Convention.

Article 8 provides that the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) shall perform the Bureau duties under the Convention until such time as another organization or government is appointed by a majority of two-thirds of all Contracting Parties. Through adoption of a resolution* at its fourth meeting (Montreux, Switzerland, 1990), the Conference of the Parties established a "Convention Bureau" "co-located with the headquarters of IUCN, an independent

* See annex to document Doc. C.4.15 (Rev.), 1990.

unit which is funded from the Convention budget and which performs all tasks required by the Conference of the Contracting Parties". By the adoption of resolution IX.10 at its ninth meeting (Kampala, Uganda, 2005), the Conference of the Contracting Parties decided that in its external relations the Bureau could use the term "the Ramsar Secretariat".

Resolution 3.3, adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties at its third meeting (Regina, Canada, 1987), established a Standing Committee of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Convention and the work of the Secretariat between meetings of the Conference of the Parties. Its terms of reference have occasionally been amended by the Conference.

Vision and mission:

The Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, at its twelfth meeting (Punta del Este, Uruguay, 2015), adopted a strategic plan for the Convention, establishing that:

> The vision of the Convention is: "Wetlands are conserved, wisely used, restored and their benefits are recognized and valued by all"; and
>
> The mission of the Convention is: "The conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world."

2. Status as an intergovernmental organization

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty that promotes the wise use of wetlands, in particular wetlands of international importance. It currently has 169 Contracting Parties. As noted above, article 8 of the Convention provides for IUCN to perform Bureau duties "until such time as another organization or government is appointed ...". IUCN continued in this role until a resolution was adopted at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties establishing an independent Bureau (hereafter referred to as the Secretariat) charged with providing the Conference of the Contracting Parties with administrative, scientific and technical support. That resolution further provided that the Secretariat would comprise a Secretary-General and other staff. In relevance to which, the resolution made the Secretary-General responsible to the Conference of the Contracting Parties and, between meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, to the Standing Committee (see above) for all matters under the Convention (including the administration of the Convention budget), other than those requiring the exercise of legal personality. Such matters would continue to be performed on the Convention's behalf by IUCN.

Over time, the Conference of the Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee have charged the Secretariat with increasing responsibility. As a consequence of its expanding functions, a Delegation of Authority to the Secretary-General of the Secretariat was signed in 1993 between the Chair of the Standing Committee and the Director-General of IUCN. The Delegation, which remains in force, authorizes the Secretary-General to, inter alia: enter into contracts; receive and expend Convention funds; administer a separate bank account; hire, dismiss and manage staff; and manage its facility.

Today, the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands employs 24 permanent staff, including specialist advisers serving the Convention regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and Oceania) charged with liaising with Contracting Parties from each of those regions

and undertaking, as directed by the Conference of the Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee, regionally specific work and activities. The Secretariat of the Convention has, on behalf of the Convention, entered into formal memorandums of understanding or other forms of cooperative agreements with more than 50 entities, including government ministries, intergovernmental bodies (including other multilateral environmental agreements), non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and private sector companies. The Secretariat is required to administer funding programmes established to support the implementation of the Convention and is, together with Contracting Parties, responsible for implementing the Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan. The Secretariat is also responsible for maintaining the list of Wetlands of International Importance, as well as the "Montreux Record" of listed wetlands that are at risk of experiencing a change in ecological character.[b]

The aforementioned powers and activities of the Secretariat imply that it has international legal personality. The structure, functions and activities of the Secretariat also evidence that it possesses the features of an organization, responsible for its actions to the 169 Contracting Parties to the Convention. It is our proposal that a Secretariat with international legal personality and directed by a cohort of States to assist in the implementation of a Convention may itself be characterized as an intergovernmental (or international) organization.[c] That the treaty is intergovernmental is self-evident.

In advancing this argument, we note that intergovernmental organizations (that are clearly accepted as such) often function in a similar manner to the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (and possibly with less autonomy). That is, while these organizations often possess a legal personality that is separate from their member States, "they have few, if any, powers of independent action, and progress in the development of policy and law depends entirely on the willingness of member states to propose, to adopt and to implement whatever is agreed".[d] We further note that the definition or conception of an intergovernmental or international organization continues to evolve, as reflected by legal scholarship on the subject.[e]

Finally, we note that the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention of Wetlands has itself been characterized by other entities as an international organization. For example, the "List of accredited intergovernmental organizations that can participate in the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14" includes the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands among the "Intergovernmental Organizations accredited as Observers to the World Summit on Sustainable Development" (at number 154).[f] The Secretariat is

[b] Article 3.2 of the Convention requires each Contracting Party to inform the Secretariat if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.

[c] We note that article 2 (1) (i) of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969) defines "international organization" as an "intergovernmental organization". That is, for the purposes of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the two terms are interchangeable.

[d] See Birnie, Patricia; Boyle, Alan, *International Law and the Environment*, Second Edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002.

[e] See, for example, Churchill, R; Ulfstein, G, "Autonomous institutional arrangements in multilateral environmental agreements: a little-noticed phenomenon in international law", *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 94, No. 4, (Oct. 2000); Volgy, Thomas J.; Fausett, Elizabeth; Grant, Keith A.; Rodgers, Stuart, "Identifying Formal Intergovernmental Organizations", *Journal of Peace Research* (2008), vol. 45, No. 6 (Nov. 2008).

[f] Available online: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/12196IGO_list_for_OCEAN_CONFERENCE_24_May_2017.pdf (accessed 11 August 2017).

also listed as an international organization in the Open Yearbook maintained by the Union of International Associations.[g]

3. Ramsar Convention and matters of interest to the General Assembly

There is a clear nexus between the objectives of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which promotes the wise use of wetlands,[h] and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the General Assembly.[i] Specifically, conservation of wetlands contributes to a number of the Goals, in particular:

Goal 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture);

Goal 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all);

Goal 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts);

Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources);

Goal 15 (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss).

The Ramsar Convention has a long history of promoting the relationship between wetlands and sustainable development. For example:

- The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008 adopted at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Valencia, Spain, 2002) highlighted the explicit links between the sustainable use of wetlands and the health and well-being of human beings.[j]
- The "Changwon Declaration on human well-being and wetlands" was adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Changwon, Republic of Korea, 2008)[k] in recognition of the "contribution of wetlands to human well-being, livelihoods and human health ...". The Declaration itself noted that wetlands "provide food, store carbon, regulate the water flows, store energy, and are crucial for biodiversity. Their benefits to people are essential for the future security of humankind. Conservation and the wise use of wetlands are vital for people, especially the poor".
- At the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Bucharest, Romania, 2012), the Contracting Parties adopted resolution XI.21, entitled "Wetlands and sustainable development", which calls on Contracting Parties to disseminate and promote the Tehran Declaration on Wetlands and Sustainable Development, which, inter alia, acknowledged the "vital role of wetlands in sustainable development and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015".

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[g] Available online: https://www.uia.org/s/or/en/1100067521 (accessed 11 August 2017).

[h] "Wise use" is defined as "the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development". See: Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010, "Wise use of wetlands: Concepts and approaches for the wise use of wetlands" (Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands, 4th edition, Handbook 1).

[i] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

[j] Resolution VIII.25.

[k] Resolution X.3.

- The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024 adopted at the twelfth meeting of the 2th Conference of the Parties[1] focused on the links between the wise use of wetlands and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- On 21 June 2017, the Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands delivered an executive briefing entitled "The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands towards the Sustainable Development Goals" to the Permanent Missions of Member States at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The briefing was attended by representatives of 48 countries and seven organizations, and was chaired by the Chief of the Political Affairs and Partnerships Section at the United Nations, who noted the political and economic importance of wetlands, the central role played by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in their protection and in advancing the sustainable development agenda.

Finally, it is worth noting that 2,280 wetlands spread across 220,453,845 hectares have been designated under the Ramsar Convention. A significant proportion of these sites are located in nations and regions suffering from extreme poverty, inadequate food security and poor water sanitation. Furthermore, many of these nations and regions are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Sustainable management of wetlands can assist to alleviate these issues and in turn to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

[1] Resolution XII.2.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat),

1. *Decides* to invite the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of the observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the action necessary to implement the present resolution.

72nd plenary meeting
xx December 2017

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General Assembly

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Seventy-second session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the seventy-second session

Observer status for the Global Environment Facility in the General Assembly

Note verbale dated 12 August 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to request, pursuant to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the Global Environment Facility in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, enclosed herewith are an explanatory memorandum (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II).

The Permanent Mission of Uruguay requests that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

I. Historical background

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was created to provide funding to developing countries for projects that achieve global environmental benefits.

In the 1980s, as the realization set in that environmental damage was truly global in nature, the international community responded with the negotiation of the Montreal Protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Biodiversity and Agenda 21, which was proclaimed at the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro.

In this context, many ideas were discussed on new sources of funding for the activities necessary to address environmental degradation. In September 1989, France proposed that the World Bank be provided with additional resources to fund environmental projects, offering to support it with a contribution of 900 million French francs over a three-year period. Its proposal was quickly seconded by Germany. And little more than a year later, in November 1990, 27 countries, including nine developing ones, agreed to set up a pilot Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The World Bank acted as both trustee and administrator; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed most of the capacity-building proposals; and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) concentrated on strategic planning and issues concerning science and technology. It was a remarkable blend of United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions.

At the first participants meeting, in December 1991, developing countries stressed the need for universal membership of GEF and democratic decision-making, and the donors agreed. In the final weeks before the Earth Summit in Rio opened, the negotiators of the climate and biodiversity conventions agreed that GEF should be designated as the operator of their agreements' financial mechanisms, on the basis that it would be restructured and its membership made universal.

Almost three years of intensive talks followed in Abidjan, Rome, Beijing, Washington, D.C., Paris and Cartagena. Negotiations to restructure the Global Environment Facility concluded at a GEF participants meeting in Geneva in March 1994, with the acceptance by representatives of 73 States of the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility. The Instrument was formally adopted, in accordance with its paragraph 1, by the three implementing agencies of GEF: UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. The Instrument became effective on 7 July 1994.

The Global Environment Facility currently has 183 participant countries (see www.thegef.org/country) and supports projects and programmes in five focal areas: climate change, biological diversity, land degradation, international waters and chemicals and waste. GEF serves as a financial mechanism for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. While not formally linked to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, GEF provides support to its work in countries with economies in transition. GEF works as a partnership with 18 implementing partner agencies, including United Nations organizations, multilateral development banks,

and major civil society organizations. It works closely with civil society organizations represented though the GEF civil society organization network. GEF has a special programme to support community-based organizations called the GEF Small Grants Programme. GEF also supports activities involving the private sector, in particular through its non-grant instrument.

II. Purpose and function

Pursuant to article 2 of the Instrument, "The GEF shall operate ... as a mechanism for international cooperation for the purpose of providing new and additional grant and concessional funding to meet the agreed incremental costs of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits".

For this purpose, the GEF trust fund has been replenished six times. In its 25-year history, GEF has invested $16 billion directly, and leveraged $90 billion in additional resources, for over 4,000 projects in 167 countries. GEF is the largest public funder of actions to protect the global environment.

A. Climate change

In climate change mitigation, over 1,000 projects target a vast range of sectors: from technology transfer, energy efficiency, renewable energy and transport to land use, land-use change and forestry. Together, GEF investments have supported more than 50 low-emission technologies, and directly helped to reduce 2.7 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

The Global Environment Facility is a mechanism for adaptation to climate change, managing two funds under the Framework Convention on Climate Change for that purpose: the least developed countries fund and the special climate change fund. GEF has approved over $1 billion through the least developed countries fund for adaptation projects and programmes, as well as activities to help countries to lay the foundation for adaptation. It has financed the preparation of 51 national adaptation programmes of action. Through the special climate change fund, GEF has provided over $300 million for adaptation projects, mobilizing another $2.3 billion from other partners. GEF climate change adaptation projects have helped to reduce the vulnerability of more than 17 million people in 129 countries around the world.

The 2016 Paris Agreement mandated GEF to lead the capacity-building initiative on transparency that helps countries to comply with their commitments under article 13 of that Agreement. Over $50 million have been raised for this purpose and over 10 projects are currently under way. Activities include strengthening national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities; providing relevant tools, training and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in article 13 of the Agreement; and assisting in the improvement of transparency over time.

B. Biological diversity

The Global Environment Facility has invested over $4.5 billion to conserve and sustainably use global biodiversity. This investment has leveraged over $12 billion in additional funds, supporting 1,300 projects in more than 155 countries. As the largest funding mechanism for protected areas worldwide, GEF has invested in over 3,300 protected areas, covering more than 860 million ha, an area larger than the size of Brazil. GEF has also provided biodiversity protection and planning for more than 350 million ha of productive landscapes and seascapes. In addition, GEF has supported the development of national biosafety frameworks

in 126 countries, and their subsequent implementation under the Cartagena Protocol. Mainstreaming ecosystem services has been a focus of many GEF projects.

C. Land degradation

Since 2006, when land degradation became a dedicated GEF focal area, GEF has provided $876 million in resources for 190 projects and programmes with a specific focus on supporting sustainable land management to combat desertification and deforestation, creating multiple benefits for the global environment in production landscapes. The land degradation focal area projects and programmes have targeted 281 million ha of agro-ecosystems globally. Based on the implementation reports of ongoing projects and programmes, 103 million ha are under sustainable land management. These have benefited more than 50 million smallholders through various activities such as inputs into their farming systems, improvement of irrigation structures, training and capacity-building, and alternative livelihood opportunities. The GEF investment has leveraged almost $3 billion from partners. These funds have helped to hold the line against global land degradation, while simultaneously improving the livelihood base of millions of rural people who rely on agriculture for their livelihood.

D. Chemicals and waste

The Global Environment Facility has adopted an integrated approach to chemicals and waste that combines persistent organic pollutants, ozone-depleting substances, mercury and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management in a single focal area. This approach maximizes cross-cutting global environmental benefits, while continuing to support the individual chemical conventions. Since the adoption of the Stockholm Convention in 2001, GEF has committed $1 billion dollars to projects concerning persistent organic pollutants. Additional funds invested by partners in the public and private sectors have brought the total value of the portfolio to more than $3 billion dollars. These investments help dispose of PCBs and obsolete pesticides, including DDT. They also reduce both persistent organic pollutants unintentionally generated by industrialized countries and those produced in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. GEF has invested $200 million to help 18 countries with economies in transition to meet the phase-out targets of the Montreal Protocol for ozone-depleting substances. National and bilateral partners contributed an additional $211 million to these projects, which have transferred new technologies, enhanced recycling operations and provided training to reduce the use of ozone-depleting substances. With GEF support, consumption and production of chlorofluorocarbons have been eliminated and work continues on addressing other ozone-depleting substances such as hydrochlorofluorocarbons.

Since 2010, GEF has committed $47 million to mercury projects. These range from Minamata initial assessments, development and capacity-building to health-care waste management, life cycle management of mercury-containing products and waste, and artisanal small-scale gold mining.

E. International waters

The Global Environment Facility is a significant global funder of multi-country collaborations on shared water systems, including both freshwater and oceans. Projects support 34 transboundary river basins in 73 countries, 12 transboundary lakes, 8 transboundary groundwater basins and 23 of Earth's 64 large marine ecosystems, shared by developing countries working together to manage their transboundary water resources. More than $1.8 billion has been invested directly, leveraging $11 billion in additional funds for over 230 projects in 170 countries.

III. Governance bodies

The governance structure of the Global Environment Facility consists of the Assembly, the Council, the secretariat and the Independent Evaluation Office. It also has a Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel. Their functions are as follows:

Assembly

The Assembly consists of representatives of all participants and meets every four years. The Assembly reviews the general policies of the Facility; reviews and evaluates the operation of the Facility on the basis of reports submitted by the Council; keeps under review the membership of the Facility; and considers, for approval by consensus, amendments to the Instrument on the basis of recommendations by the Council.

Council

The Council consists of 32 members, and an equal number of alternate members representing constituency groupings formulated and distributed, taking into account the need for balanced and equitable representation of all participants and giving due weight to the funding efforts of all donors. It has 16 members from developing countries, 14 members from developed countries and 2 members from the countries of central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The Council meets twice a year.

The Council keeps under review the operation of the Facility with respect to its purposes, scope and objectives; ensures that GEF policies, programmes, operational strategies and projects are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis; reviews and approves the work programme, monitors and evaluates progress in the implementation of the work programme and provides related guidance; directs the utilization of GEF funds, reviews the availability of resources from the GEF trust fund and cooperates with the trustee to mobilize financial resources; approves and periodically reviews operational modalities for the Facility, including operational strategies and directives for project selection, means to facilitate arrangements for project preparation and execution, additional eligibility and other financing criteria, procedural steps to be included in the project cycle, and the mandate, composition and role of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel; acts as the focal point for the purpose of relations with the Conferences of the Parties to the Conventions; ensures that GEF-financed activities relating to the Conventions conform with the policies, programme priorities and eligibility criteria decided by the Conference of the Parties for the purposes of the convention concerned; appoints the Chief Executive Officer, oversees the work of the secretariat, and assigns specific tasks and responsibilities to the secretariat; reviews and approves the administrative budget of GEF and arranges for periodic financial and performance audits; and exercises such other operational functions as may be appropriate to fulfil the purposes of the Facility.

Secretariat

The secretariat shall service and report to the Assembly and the Council. The secretariat implements the decisions of the Assembly and the Council; coordinates the formulation and oversees the implementation of programme activities pursuant to the work programme, ensuring liaison with other bodies as required; ensures the implementation of the operational policies adopted by the Council through the preparation of common guidelines on the project cycle, monitoring of project implementation and evaluation of project results; coordinates with the secretariats

of other international bodies, in particular, the secretariats of the Conventions; reports to the Assembly, the Council and other institutions as directed by the Council; and provides the trustee with all relevant information to enable it to carry out its responsibilities.

Independent Evaluation Office

The Independent Evaluation Office is headed by a director, appointed by and reporting to the Council, whose responsibility it is to carry out independent evaluations consistent with decisions of the Council; and perform any other functions assigned by the Council.

Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel is an advisory body to the Facility. It is established by UNEP, in consultation with UNDP and the World Bank and on the basis of guidelines and criteria established by the Council. UNEP provides the Panel's secretariat and operates as the liaison between the Facility and the Panel.

IV. Observer status in the General Assembly

It is highly relevant for the Global Environment Facility to be accredited to participate in the meetings of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies as well as other international gatherings involving issues related to the GEF mandate. GEF plays a key role internationally in supporting the implementation of several United Nations global environmental conventions and the global environmental agenda in general. The participation of GEF in major international meetings involving these issues is often critical for GEF to carry out its work and mandate. In addition, GEF has the resources and the expertise to make a significant contribution to all such meetings, dialogues and decisions, by helping to shape the global policy dialogue and by supporting its implementation. For example, though not formally associated with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all GEF projects contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015 and the co-benefits in the social and economic areas that result from GEF projects also help to achieve the relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Global Environment Facility in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Global Environment Facility,

1. *Decides* to invite the Global Environment Facility to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the action necessary to implement the present resolution.